

GRACE MORTON.

BY

MADAME SKELTON.

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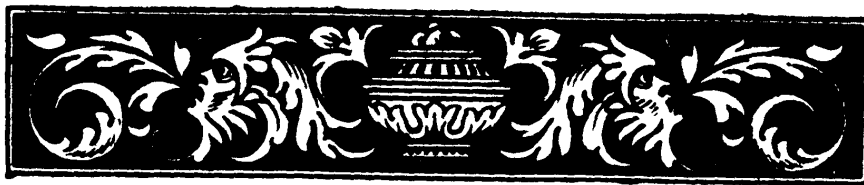
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PREFACE.

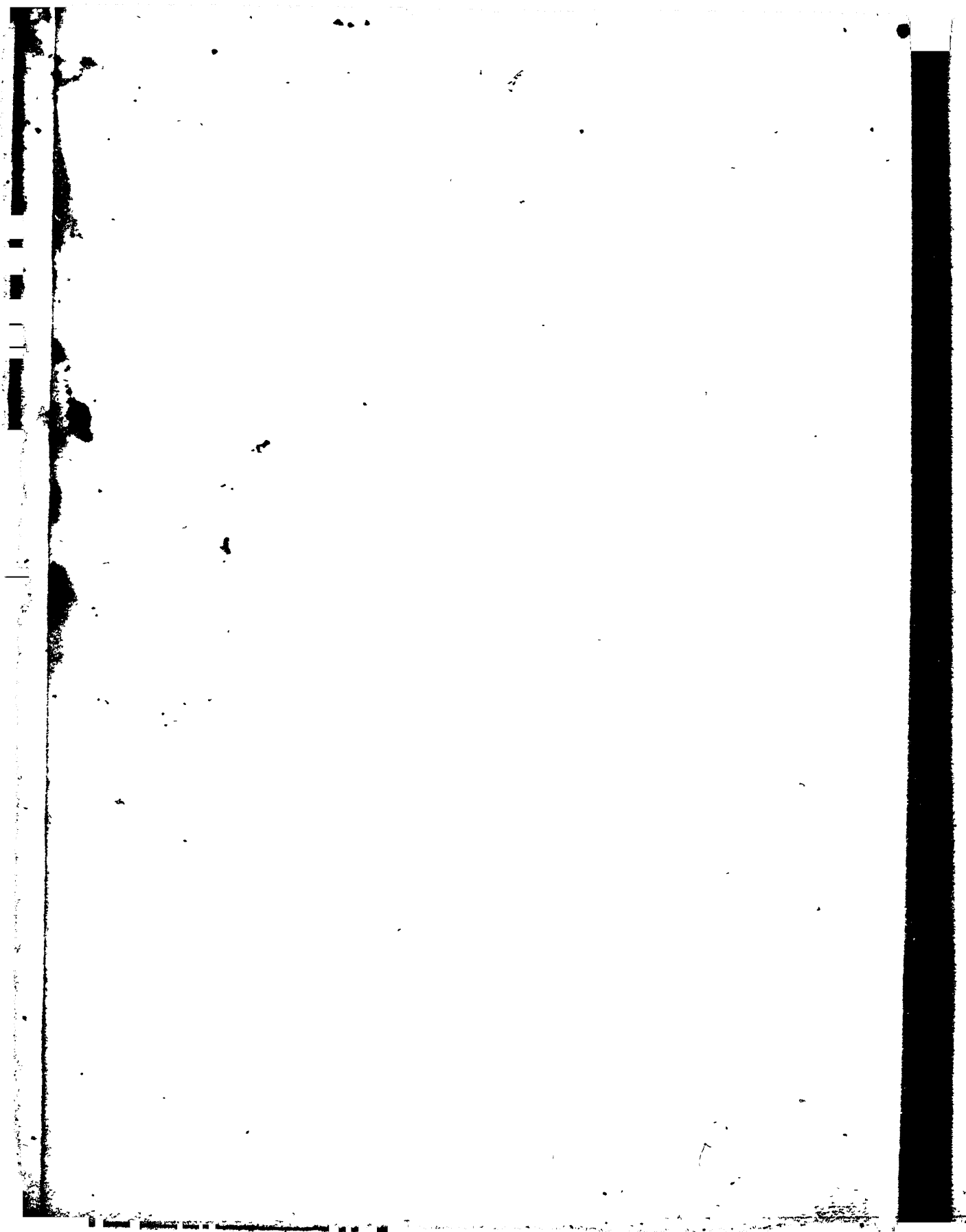
THE authoress of this book, after laying past the pen for many years, presents herself to the reading public in the English language. The merits and demerits of it must express themselves in its being read; but should there be expressions not quite correct in English, I would beg my readers to be lenient in their criticisms, and kindly remember that I am a native of Germany. In my next work, which will very shortly appear, I may do better. As to the heroine of this book, my young friends will know that in every large school will be found a "Grace Morton," and it is the heartfelt wish of the authoress that she may come out of the fire as victorious as the "Grace Morton" of this book.

DEDICATED
TO THE PUPILS
OF THE
BISHOP STRACHAN SCHOOL,
WYKEHAM HALL,
TORONTO.



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GRACE MORTON.

CHAPTER I.

IN a large room in Madame Giatto's School sat a group of girls of all sizes and ages, eagerly discussing the arrival of the last new comer. It was at the beginning of a new school year; some of the old pupils, with a sprinkling of new ones were assembled, and by the tone of their voices, it was evident that the last new comer had occasioned considerable interest, not only by her handsome attire, but also by her stately and commanding manners. All surrounded Minnie Davies, one of the older pupils, to listen to her animated description of Grace Morton, who had arrived only a few minutes before, had been received

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by the Lady-Principal, and conducted by her to her own room, which was next to Minnie's, and she had therefore seen her before the others, who had only caught a passing glimpse of her as she passed through the large hall.

"What dress had she on," asked Nellie, "was it not a silk one, and is she not very handsome?"

"Yes, she is a beauty and no mistake," replied Minnie, "and her dress is a corded silk. Madame Giatto introduced me to her, but she only presented the tips of her fingers, and would go in; no other room but Ida's. I know Ida is bringing her cousin with her, and will not be able to have her now in her room."

"Why would she not go in any other room," asked Lucy Heaslip, "surely there is plenty of room in ours?"

"She told Madame Giatto that she could not sleep in a room with many beds, and she asked to have her bed in Ida's room, it looked so cosy, and has such a lovely view; and as she looked a little homesick, Madame G. gratified her in this whim. Did you see her luggage carried in? Dear me! she has as many boxes and

parcels, as if she had come to stay here all her life. I hope she will not dress too much, or we may look a little seedy by the side of her."

"I don't care how grand she dresses," replied Marie Rogers, "I shall not envy her; it is not proper for school girls to dress conspicuously. What would be the good of Madame Giatto teaching us simplicity, if we do not practise it? I have all my last winter dresses made over again, and shall require nothing but a new hat and a pair of boots."

"Was that gentleman her father who brought her?" asked Marian Macpherson of Minnie.

"Yes, and he is coming again this afternoon to have a long talk with madame; I heard him say so."

"Well, he is a nice gentleman I am sure; he shook me by the hand when madame told him I had been here three years, 'That is right,' said he, 'I only wish I had brought my daughter here before; you will make friends with Grace, won't you?'"

"I will if she lets me," I answered. "You see she scarcely looked at me when I saw her, and I

felt a little annoyed. I think she is very proud, and must resemble her mother. Her father is dark; but she is like a beautiful piece of marble, with the bluest of forget-me-not eyes, and golden hair, and such a pretty pair of hands. I don't think she has ever done anything with them, they are so delicate. I wonder how she will like to take her turn at the Wednesday's dinner."

"She will have to learn as I did," said another of the young ladies; "don't you remember the fuss I made? I feel quite ashamed now to think of it, and if they had listened to my complaints at home, I don't think I ever could have been reconciled to it; but the only answer I got to my letters were that they knew all about it; and it was for this reason they sent me here, that I might learn, besides my other accomplishments, how to cook a good dinner at the least possible expense, and become useful at home when my school life was over. I think she will like the many nice dishes we make, and if she likes to eat them, she ought to know how to cook them. I quite startled our servant at home with my

achievement in cooking. She lifted her hands in wonder when I asked her once to let me see to the dinner, as it was washing day and the weather extremely warm."

"'You cook the dinner Miss Annie!' she exclaimed, 'why what next, do you want to burn yourself to pieces; besides you know master is so mighty particular about his meals.'"

"I know Kate," I answered, "but I can do it as well as you, and you can finish your washing." So at last when mother came and told her that I had helped to cook many a good dinner for the last year, she complied, but was lost in wonder that I should have learnt this art at school.

"'Dear me Missis, I thought the school Miss Annie went to was to teach her music, and them furrin words—what you call them.'"

"'French and German you mean,' said mother, 'Oh she learns that too, and many other things, but she also learns to keep house, and will be a great help to you when she returns home for good.'"

"So I cooked the dinner all by myself that day, and received great praise from my father for it,

and many dishes have I cooked since, when I was at home."

"What did you cook that day?" asked Minnie.

"There was a leg of lamb, green peas, and new potatoes, and a fruit tart; and I went and gathered herbs to make a green sauce, which father and mother had never eaten before. They liked it so much that father said he would see that all the necessary herbs were planted next year. He thinks he never eat salad so much to his taste as that which I made; and one day when we had friends to dinner, I helped Kate with everything, and had the ordering of the dinner, and the buying of the various articles for it myself, for as father said, 'what would be the good if I did not know how to purchase,' so he provided me with cash the day before, and told me there would be six gentlemen with their wives to dinner. 'Look sharp, little woman,' said he, 'they come to test your cookery. I have told them so much about your capabilities, and that excellent school, so don't disgrace it.' So I rose early next morning, and went to the butcher's by seven o'clock, and chose a nice piece

of roast beef, and bones for soup. Then I bought a pair of young ducks, vegetables we had in our own garden, as also fruit and flowers, and I can tell you we had a tip-top dinner that day; and almost entirely arranged by your humble servant. Kate could do nothing but look on in wonder."

"Tell us all you had for dinner that day," cried half-a-dozen voices at once.

"Well," said Annie, "there was bouillon, with a knuckle of roast beef and green sauce, and cauliflower; ducks with green peas; a fricassee of pigeons, and new potatoes; and a compound of apples and plums, with wine sauce, raspberry tart and dessert. They all enjoyed the good things very much, and complimented me on my cleverness, and also the school that had done so much for me. I should say it was the gentlemen who were loudest in their praises, for I think the ladies were a little jealous of me. One in particular, who is an indifferent housekeeper, when her husband was bestowing his praises on me, looked daggers at me across the table, and I know she was greatly disappointed when she found I could do other things besides cooking.

I was asked to play and sing, and as she saw me advancing to the piano, 'I suppose,' said she, 'you can play better in the kitchen than in the drawing room;' but when she saw I was not deficient even there, nothing could exceed her vexation. She looked perfectly black, and would not have stayed for supper had it not been for her husband, who said he must taste my salad of which father had spoken, and a glorious supper we had afterwards, all of my preparing."

By this time Grace Morton having got through the inspection of her room, now came down accompanied by the Lady-Principal, who as she entered, introduced her to the young ladies there assembled. "My dears," said she, "this is Miss Morton. Minnie Davies, you have been already introduced; will you be kind enough to make Miss Morton acquainted with the different names, while I go and see how long it will be before dinner is ready."

So Minnie introduced the young ladies assembled, and Miss Morton condescended to shake each by the hand, and to take a seat amongst them. Susie Heaslip, a lively little brunette, with

sparkling eyes, who always was getting into some trouble or other, because she was so full of mischief (although one of the best hearted girls), which must have a vent upon some one, took a seat by Miss Morton, and began the conversation by asking her "how she liked the school, and where did she go before she came here?"

"I never was at school before," answered Grace, "I always had a private governess, and I do not think I shall like this school."

"Why not?" asked Susie.

"I don't know," lisped Grace, "but I know there will be so many things done here that I have not been accustomed to, and then I suppose you have to study very hard, and I hate that; it makes my side ache and gives me a head-ache."

"Yes, we do study hard when we are about it," said Susie, "but we like it; but as to getting side-ache or head-ache from study, that is all gammon. I for one don't believe in it, and we have plenty of recreation after school hours. Just look at us; did you ever see a healthier looking set of girls than we are? Why, I was once a puny, sickly looking thing, without a

speck of colour in my face ; and now look at me. I feel like a little lion in strength, and often wish I had a little more scope to let it out on."

They all laughed heartily at this speech of Miss Susie's. There was not one of the old pupils who had not at one time or another felt Miss Susie's boasted strength ; but notwithstanding the numerous pranks she played upon them, was beloved by all. She was always ready, as the saying is, to do a good turn to any of them.

Very soon the dinner bell rang, and they all passed into the large dining-room, where they found several of the resident teachers with the Lady-Principal. All take their seats, and Grace Morton chose hers beside Maude Melville, one of the oldest pupils of the school ; and as they had not during dinner much time to talk, the few kind words which Maude addressed to Grace had the effect of removing some of the sadness too plainly visible in her countenance ; so that after dinner when they all went out into the beautiful grounds which surrounded the school, to play at croquet, Grace had so far recovered

her spirits as to listen to a large group of young ladies, who were sitting under the shade trees detailing their school lives, and as mischief was still uppermost in the mind of Susie Heaslip, she tried to make Grace Morton's hair stand on end by her description of school discipline.

Miss Morton had from the first taken a great liking to Maude Melville, and now she seated herself quite close to her, and as far from Susie as it was possible to be; but this did not prevent that young lady from playing her pranks, which Maude tried in vain to stop. When Susie was in her mischievous moods, some one or other must be the victim; and till the object of her mischief was nearly driven to distraction, she would not stop; and then as if to atone for what she had done, would by some kindly act ensure her forgiveness. Grace Morton's consequence had nettled her, and she was going to take her "down a peg" as she styled it to Laurie Dunbar.

"But Susie, you must not offend a new comer," said Laurie, "Madame Giatto will not be pleased."

"I am not going to offend her," she answered, "but I will tell her all our doings here, and see how she will open her eyes in wonder, so here goes."

"Miss Morton," cried Susie, "has Maude told you that you will have to learn domestic economy here; that is, twice a week you must help to cook the dinner, and all the new comers have to do the slop work for the other pupils, so when my turn comes I shall let you peel and wash the potatoes, make the pies and puddings, in short, prepare for my hands. I do this out of kindness to you, because I think we suit each other so admirably," she added.

The look of horror on Grace's face showed what impression her words had produced. "Is this true?" she whispered to Maude, who pressing her hand answered, "Yes, it is quite true that we learn domestic economy; but it is not such a task as Susie describes it; she is only trying to frighten you."

"Frighten her," cried that young lady, "now Maude, how can you talk so; is it not true that she will have to learn to cook, to bake, and a

hundred other things, of which I bet she knows no more than the man of the moon?"

"Nor did you when you first came," she replied, "and I hope Grace will find, like we all did, what benefit it will be to her."

"Well, I hope she will," said Susie, "but I should like to see her with her fine hands peeling potatoes, that is all."

Grace could hardly keep back her tears, but pride forbade her. She now answered to Susie's remarks for the first time by saying, "That she would do no such thing, that she would rather leave at once, and as her father was coming this afternoon she would tell him, and he would take her away again." At these remarks Susie became a little frightened, as she knew that she should receive a severe rebuke from the Lady-principal, so she tried to smooth matters over a little by giving a glowing account of the fun they had at their cooking, and enlarging on the many good dishes they made, and which they would not have if they did not make them themselves; and as Grace was fond of good things she became a little calmer, but still she resolved

not to stay if they wanted her to do such degrading work, and as she looked around her on the group of smiling happy faces, and examined their hands too, and although some did not look so delicate as her own, there was not one pair of hands in that group of young ladies which showed traces of their domestic work. She looked at Maude's; they were a pair of little fat hands which had done many useful things, and whose owner was at the head of the music class, showing that she would be able to grace any drawing-room, and not be behind-hand in useful things. She could not understand why young ladies should learn such things when they could have servants for all requisite purposes, but she forbore to make further remarks, knowing she should get the worst of it. Then in the group which surrounded her, she saw they were the merriest girls of the school; each told something or other of the work that was to be done, so that Grace sat there wondering if it could be true, or were they one and all trying to impose upon her. No, it must be true; Maude had said so, and no one could doubt her statement.

Cora Reynolds told of the amusement they had in the long winter evenings: "We often have a large party, and then we have tableaux to amuse our guests, and we give them music and singing, and finish up with coffee and most delicious cakes, the work of our own hands. I tell you it is worth a month's work to see how the gentlemen enjoy these good things, and the compliments they pay are unceasing; and now and then the Council dine here, and the dinner we give them I think does us credit. And when the Governor comes again, we intend to invite him and his lady to meet the Council and their wives to dinner, and I tell you, Miss Morton, I shall not mind what falls to my lot, if I can only help to prepare for such an honoured guest, as the much beloved representative of our Queen.

"I shall esteem it an honour to wait upon him at the table," cried little Nellie Rogers, "and I tell you what girls, it will be prime fun to stand behind his lady's chair. Of course we do all the waiting; shall we not Maude?" she asked of that young lady.

"I think not," Maude answered, "we will lay the table, but the servants must do the waiting; every one of us ought to contribute something towards the cooking and any other preparation, and I think too it will be a grand day in the annals of this school when our beloved Governor dines here, and the dinner is prepared by the pupils."

For a long time they talked of this auspicious day, and I am not sure if they did not prepare the bill of fare, but as all things must have an end, so at last they rose, and strolled towards the house, where they found Mr. Morton, who had for some time past been in deep conversation with the Lady-Principal respecting the future of his daughter Grace, an only child, and as dear to his heart as his own life.

Grace possessed many fine qualities, and a loving nature, but hitherto these nobler gifts had never been brought into use, either to her own advantage or any one else's; she had acquired habits, which if not at once checked would increase upon her, till ultimately she might become a heartless, selfish woman. Her father,

a true and sensible man, although weak in some points, saw the error in his daughter's bringing up, and he at once resolved in placing her somewhere where better habits might be formed, and those nobler qualities which she really possessed be called forth into action, and become all that is lovely in woman, and be a blessing to him in his old age. It was a hard struggle to part with her, so beloved as she was, but it had to be, or his darling child's character would be entirely ruined.

There was Aunt Jane who acted in concord with her mother which should contribute their fullest share towards spoiling her; she was for ever sick from all the trash she was allowed to eat, and at last her father with the help of Dr. Squills "carried the day" to send her away from home.

"Send Grace away from home!" said aunty, "you don't mean it!"

"Send Grace away from home, you never shall!" exclaimed mamma.

"Tell them she must go," whispered papa to the disciple of Esculapius.

Dr. Squills thus addressed, consulted the ceiling, but finding no point there upon which to concentrate his thoughts, brought his eyes to bear upon aunty's spectacles, and in a voice made solemn especially for the occasion, thus spoke: "Ladies it is not my desire to alarm you when I say it is absolutely necessary for the preservation of Miss Grace's health that she should be sent away from home as soon as possible; she needs change of air, change of scene, change of associations. Yes, I say, send Miss Grace away."

"Where is she to be sent, Doctor?" feebly enquired aunty.

"To a celebrated boarding school, madam, pleasantly situated in Upper Canada, and where the comforts of a home, combined with careful instruction, will be experienced, and many other advantages that are not to be found in every home. In short, this excellent school finishes the education of young ladies, and so prepares them for the duties of life, that they will be blessings to the homes they occupy, and a credit to the country."

"Boarding school!" ejaculated aunty, "goodness me, they'll starve her there!"

"Nothing of the kind, madam; they have an excellent table there; all the delicacies of the season," said the Doctor.

"I think you have said enough," whispered papa, and then aloud, "Grace must go!"

So it was settled, and preparations were at once made for Grace's departure, and on the first day of the school re-opening, finds our heroine here, as we have seen.

Let us listen to the conversation for a moment which is being held between Mr. Morton and the Lady-Principal: "I hear you teach domestic economy," said he, "this will be a hard trial, I fear, to my daughter." In truth, madame, my Grace is a spoiled child, and will require a loving hand to lead her on; I know she will try your patience a great deal, but will you bear with her a little if she should prove not all you could wish; she possesses qualities both of the head and heart, but they sadly want developing; she has never been required to think of others or to do anything useful, and with an earnest

desire that she should become an amiable and good woman, determined me to place her in this excellent school, of which I have heard so much."

"Yes," replied Madam Giatto, "we are justly proud of our school, and our teaching. In a new country like this, where efficient servants are so difficult to obtain, and where, if the mistress is not acquainted with all the details of a house, it must necessarily bring on the family a great amount of discomfort, and even sometimes misery. To prevent this, and to make good, loving industrious women is our aim, and I hope many a home will feel the sweet influence of seed sown here, and I hope your daughter will soon learn to love what at first may appear a hardship to her. Do you wish her to learn everything here?"

"Yes, everything, and especially domestic economy," answered Mr. Morton, through whose mind passed days of misery, when there was no cook, and when he had to go for days without a decent meal, unless he went to an hotel, because his wife had never been taught to do anything except to live for the world and its plea-

tures; therefore when out of three children only Grace was left (the other two a boy and girl had died young, and it was partly owing to their being left to the care of hirelings that they came to early graves), he resolved that this his only darling should receive some useful training; but it had been so hard to part with her, that year after year had passed, till Grace was nearly sixteen years of age before her father could carry out his long cherished resolution.

"We will do all in our power to make her happy," said Madame Giatto, "although at first some do not like our rules, but after a time it becomes a pleasure to learn, and we spread so much home influence here, that when many of our pupils leave us they do so reluctantly; and I hope we shall prove it so in your daughter's case."

Thus a little comforted, Mr. Morton rose to go, Grace being called in to bid her father "good bye." On entering the room, the Lady-Principal withdrew, leaving father and daughter alone together. "Oh father," were the first words of Grace, "do not leave me here; they tell me I

shall have to learn domestic economy, and to study very hard, and you know it gives me a head-ache. You did not know all this, did you, or you would not have brought me, would you?"

"Yes dear, I did know all that is taught here, and it is for this reason that I wish you to try for my sake to learn all that is taught in this excellent school. A time may come my child, when you may be a great help to me and your mother."

"But father," said Grace, "we are rich people, and why should I learn things which are not fit for a lady to do; no lady cooks her own dinner; of course she has servants to do it."

"My dear child," said Mr. Morton, and in his voice a slight tremor was perceptible, because he scarce knew how to answer her, but appealing to her love for him, which was very great, "my dear child, no work however humble degrades a true lady or gentleman; we are rich as you say, but I want you to try to learn, so if ever we should be without a cook, poor papa has not to go without his dinner, as he has been obliged to do so many times. You love me, don't

you Grace? so do out of love to me what seems very hard to you now."

It was true Grace loved her father better than herself, and this love for him decided her.

"I will try, dear papa," she said, "to do all you wish me to; but oh! I know I shall not be able to stay here; I will promise to stay till Christmas, but if I fail, you will not be angry with me, but take me home then?"

He promised all, and with a sad heart he left his treasure, to see what other influence would do for her. And Grace, as the gate closed behind her father, threw herself into a chair, and wept long and bitterly, till Maude Melville came to her, and with many kind and endearing words endeavoured to soothe her grief.

That evening Ida Promfret with her cousin Georgie arrived, and although she was somewhat disappointed to find that Grace had her room, rather than leave her little cousin alone, exchanged rooms with Maude Melville, to the great delight of Grace; and so, when it was time to retire, Maude's influence over Grace began this first evening, and without intending it, she

became Grace's model in all things. Maude's motto was, "help one another," and she had to do it this night, to prevent Grace's tears flowing forth anew, but at last after offering up a prayer for preservation this day, and for strength for the next one, she saw Grace safely in bed, and as she hoped, peacefully asleep.





CHAPTER II.

THE OPENING OF THE SCHOOL.

ABOUT seven o'clock the next morning, Grace opened her eyes ; and saw Maude already fully dressed. "What is the matter ?" she asked.

"Nothing; it is past seven o'clock, and such a beautiful morning" said Maude.

"Well, it may be," answered Grace, "but I shall have another doze; I am not getting up at this hour of the day."

"But you must be dressed by half-past seven," replied Maude, "we have breakfast at a quarter to eight."

"I do not care; they will have to bring me my breakfast up here if I am not up," replied Grace, at the same time turning over on her side to go to sleep again.

But Maude would not let her do so, knowing it was against the rules of the school, and that no one was allowed to lie in bed if they were well, so she turned to Grace, giving her a kiss, and told her she must get up, and added in cheerful tones, "Come dear, make haste, and we will have a run in the garden before the breakfast bell rings."

"Well," said Grace, "I will get up to please you this morning, but don't think I shall do it every day; who is going to help me to dress, and do up my hair? Is there a maid?"

Maude had a glass of water in her hand, which she nearly dropped in astonishment. "Why Grace," she said, "you surely do not expect that there is a maid kept on purpose for us; why goodness me, what could have put such a thought into your mind?"

"Well," replied Grace, "I have always had mamma's maid to help me, and I cannot do it myself, so they must let me have somebody, or I cannot get up to-day."

Maude saw that she must be very plain-spoken with this spoiled child, who till now had

made every one except her father dance to her own tune, so turning towards Grace she said gravely, "Miss Morton you will get up at once; I will help you to dress your hair, but I cannot stay to do it in that elaborate style you have been accustomed to, nor can I promise to do it every day. I am quite willing to help you all I can, but any young lady of common sense can easily learn to do these things for herself; but do not delay any longer, or you will scarcely be dressed by the time the breakfast bell rings."

All the time Maude was speaking she was busy making her bed, not observing the astonished look on Grace Morton's face, who was slowly drawing on her stockings, till that young lady called out, "Maude, what on earth are you doing now?"

"Making my bed of course," answered Maude.

"But why are you doing it yourself? I hope this is not another rule of the school, for I won't stand it."

"I am sorry," replied Maude, "that you have such a terror of everything that a good, sensible woman takes a pleasure in doing. It is a rule to

make your bed, and tidy up your room -each morning before leaving it, and if you have never done such things before, it is high time you should learn now. I am quite willing, as I told you, to teach and help you all I can, if you will only come to me."

By this time Grace had got about half through her dressing, but as she had never excited herself before, this little effort seemed to have been too much for her, and she was about to have a good cry, when Maude bade her sit down while she dressed her hair, which was done in a few minutes in a simple and even as (Grace herself acknowledged) becoming style to a really lovely face, and Maude leaving her to finish her toilet made her bed, and set the room in order, which was scarcely finished when the breakfast bell rang. Hurried footsteps were then heard, and the merry sound of youthful voices as they passed on their way to the large breakfast-room, but owing to the dilatoriness of Miss Morton in obeying the rules of the school, she and her friend Maude were the last to enter. Over sixty young ladies, with the Lady-Principal, and several resident

teachers were assembled there, and waiting for them. After grace had been said, the clatter of knives and forks began, and it was too evident that all were ready for their morning meal. Many had been out before breakfast, and the fresh air had sharpened their appetites.

The meal being concluded, they then assembled for prayer, previous to entering upon the duties of a fresh term; and as the school was under the direct influence of the Church of England, so every morning one of its ministers opened with prayer and the singing of a hymn.

It was a very large school, numbers out of town attending as day pupils, but all was so systematically arranged, that everything went on as if by clock-work; they never seemed hurried, because time and place for everything was pre-arranged, and although too many who attended this excellent institution found it difficult to comply with these strict rules, they soon by perseverance overcame all, as indeed everything becomes an easy task to us if we only give our mind to it. And so on this first day of the new term all classes were formed for the dif-

ferent branches of education, not forgetting the one for which this school is particularly celebrated, namely: the *Branch of Domestic Economy*.

Maude Melville, Minnie Davies, Cora Ford, Jessie Heasel, and Carry Marks and her sister, and many others—all were in the highest classes, and Grace Morton felt not a little humbled to find that here, where she had hoped it would be as it had always been before, that she should be the first in everything, found that instead, she could only enter with the second classes. She was far behind in everything, because she had always ruled her governesses, and had her own way in everything: she had always been so accustomed to be first thought of, and have the praise and flattery of every one she came in contact with, that it never occurred to her it would be different here, and quite thought both pupils and teachers would bow down before her shrine. But oh how soon she was undeceived, and she found that although she might lay claims to being the handsomest young lady there, the impression she made was far from what she had anticipated; on the contrary, she was now on

her own merits, and praise would not be bestowed that was not justly her due; and many of the young ladies there, who perhaps had not so striking an appearance as herself, still their animated and intellectual countenances put all her beauty into the shade. Then what is sadder still to see (especially in young people), a beautiful face puffed up with pride of its own importance, and lacking that without which beauty is nought; but we hope that ere we close these pages, that under the sweet influence of the guardians, and the many excellent and lovely companions, Grace Morton may yet become the model pupil of the school.

On this first day our heroine became acquainted with all the boarders, but she kept herself exclusively to Maude Melville and Minnie Davies. These two she chose for her friends, and neither time nor distance ever after made a break in their friendship.

This being the first day the lessons were consequently short, and quickly gone through, and having a little time on their hands, many of the young ladies, among whom were Maude and

Minnie, went and prepared dinner under the direction of the lady who superintends them, and their labour was well repaid when they saw the table spread with the dishes of their own making; and Grace while enjoying her dinner, could scarcely credit that it was all done by her school fellows, and much better too than at home (she admitted) where they paid a high price to a cook, who had often sent up a meal that had cost a great deal—entirely spoiled.

But Grace was resolved to submit to nothing but her lessons, and these, I regret to say, were so imperfectly prepared, that she not only received demerit marks in great numbers, but also gave much additional trouble to her teachers, who at the best of times, have anything but a light task to perform. Oh! if pupils would only consider a little the toil, wear, and tear it is to their instructors, who in imparting their knowledge have to consult the different dispositions of their pupils—if they would only try to perform their part by having their lessons ready, and on all occasions showing that prompt obedience and respect to their wishes which is

justly their due, they would save a great deal of trouble.

How often do we see young ladies at school, who, instead of employing their time in gaining useful knowledge, are spending it in idleness and frivolous nonsense, not even thinking of those dear parents at home, who often make great personal sacrifices to enable them to give their daughters a superior education; the least they can do is to make the most of their time and advantages, remembering that "time waits for no one," and in after years they may live to regret the many mis-spent hours of their happy girlhood.

But there are exceptions to every rule, and I am happy to say in Madame Giatto's school, there were many there, who by their exemplary conduct were a credit to the establishment, not only by diligence doing their allotted tasks, but their daily life testified that the good seed planted in their minds would one day bring forth the choicest fruits.

Many Canadian Homes, as well as those over the line, whose daughters have attended this

institution, will feel that the only true education is that based upon christian principle, whose foundation is Christ; and many learn to drink of the Fountain of Living Waters, and spread the good seed abroad after they have finished here. Let us hope my young readers, for whose especial benefit these pages are written, will strive to imitate these bright examples in their walk through life, and if they have hitherto been neglectful on this all important point, may the future have much to record in their favour, and bear in mind that their instructors are their best friends to whom much is due, and remember it is the *Pupils* who receive the benefit of their valuable instructions, and the efforts they themselves make by study are for their own good, and for the future well-being of a true and well brought up young lady.





CHAPTER III.

A NEW PUPIL.

A few days after the opening of School, there was another addition to their number, a young lady from New York, a fair, delicate girl of fifteen. She was under the guardianship of an uncle, who paid for her education, having lost her father when only two years of age, and since that time she, with her mother, had been inmates of his house, which she had never left except in company with the family, of which there were, besides her uncle, and aunt, four cousins; and they all loved this sweet flower dearly, and she had never felt a father's love missing. How came it then that she was sent so far away from all these tender associations? We must now tell our readers.

Violet Grant was born in London, England,

where at the age of seventeen, her mother, Lucy Temple, had married Robert Grant, a young and dashing officer in Her Majesty's Service, and for a time she was a happy wife. Only one cloud dimmed the atmosphere of her happiness, and that was the absence of an only and much beloved brother, Henry Temple, who at the age of twenty had sought to improve his fortune by crossing the Atlantic, and this he had accomplished by constant diligence, and at the time of his sister's marriage was one of the richest men in New York.

As long as Mrs. Grant had her own parents living, all went on well, but she had not been married more than twelve months when she lost both of them, and was therefore left solely dependent upon her husband, who though professing to care for her with a species of idolatry, was like many of his profession, a reckless and inconsistent young man, who thought nothing of leaving his young and amiable wife for days together while on some pleasure trip with friends as thoughtless as himself.

Well was it perhaps the end came so soon.

Little Violet was not two years old when her father was drowned with two of his companions while out on the water, leaving his wife and child in actual poverty. Had not Mrs. Grant have had her brother to turn to, what would have become of her it is hard to say, but he, as soon as he heard the sad intelligence, hastened to her side to comfort her, and give the aid she so much needed, and after settling her affairs, and paying all debts contracted by his brother-in-law, he brought her with the little Violet to his home in New York, where they had remained ever since, enjoying every comfort and luxury that a home of affluence could afford. Mrs. Grant had never possessed much energy, and the little she had seemed to leave her on the death of her husband, whom she had (in spite of his faults) loved as only woman can love, fondly and trustingly; and although now not absolutely ill, she fancied herself so, and had for some years hardly left her room, where her little daughter and an old servant (who had crossed the Atlantic with them because she had been Mrs. Grant's nurse, as

also Violet's) were constantly in attendance upon her. Mrs. Grant was one of those ladies who fancy they can do nothing for themselves, because they never tried to rouse themselves from their lassitude. She gave them plenty to do, for let me tell you, Mrs. Grant was no slippered invalid; every morning her toilet had to be made in the nicest way; the "Number 3" gaiters had to be laced up just so, and then when all was complete, she would wrap a Cashmere shawl around her shoulders, and lie down on the sofa. Perhaps it was this constantly waiting on her mother after her lessons were over, that made Violet so delicate, because she would take her share in the nursing, and when she should have been in the open air, was pent up in a close room; but she was one of those thoughtful children to whom it seemed natural to feel for others, and she knew her nurse was old, and had not the strength she used to have, and to let her rest, she stopped with her mother, instead of going out for a walk with her governess.

They called her a strange child; why so it

would be hard to say. She was one of the kindest little fairies, and sweetest tempered of children one could meet with, but there was a something about her which is seldom seen in one so young. Often a shade of sadness would pass over her fair brow, which she tried to dispel by doing something for those about her; every one petted her, not that she at all encouraged it, for from the very earliest she had shown a disposition to do for herself, and at the age of ten was far more independent of the help of servants than her two cousins who were several years her senior. Their two brothers, Alfred and Charles, often upbraided them when they saw their little cousin so self-reliant and thoughtful for others, saving trouble whenever she could, and always ready with a helping hand when required; modest and retiring too, she seemed to inherit the virtues of the little flower whose name she bore.

But what had cast this gloom on so fair a face these pages must tell, and let us hope that in the school she is about to enter, that the new mode of life and associations may tend

much towards dispelling it; and let us watch with interest the development of these many virtues of the young and lovely stranger.

Violet, as we have said, was a strange child, and being often left to herself, would while away the time by examining some antiquated box or drawer. On one occasion, when only ten years old, while indulging her curiosity in this way she came across an English newspaper, which she saw at a glance was very old; naturally fond of reading she sat down on the floor, and spread it open upon her lap to study its contents, and to her utmost horror she came upon a large paragraph detailing her father's death, of whom she had heard so little. She felt at once it must have been her father; of his sad end she had never heard a word; it almost stunned her, and for a long time she sat staring at the paper. Young as she was, she felt all the force of such an end—to be without a moment's preparation called before his Maker. Pressing both her hands to her temples, she at last brought out the words, "Oh my God, if this was my father!"

Then taking the paper in her hand, she flew,

rather than walked, into her mother's room. "Mamma," she cried, holding up the paper for her mother to see, "mamma, tell me was this—was this Robert Grant my own father?"

Mrs. Grant cast one glance on the paper, and then with a loud shriek she sank back fainting on the pillow of her couch.

Almost beside herself Violet rang the bell, which brought her aunt and nurse at once, but it took a long time before Mrs. Grant recovered from her fainting fit; but all Violet was told that day concerning the fatal paper only roused her curiosity the more, and she did not rest till she had drawn from the nurse's lips the sad narrative of her father's death. It had made a lasting impression on her mind, and it was this that so often cast a shadow on her sweet face, and gave her that resolve to try as soon as she should be able, to relieve her dear kind uncle of some of the expense of supporting her and her mother, for she had also heard from nurse that her uncle was not so rich as he was reported to be.

So on one occasion while visiting at a friend's

house, she there met with a young lady who had just returned from Canada, having finished her education at Madame Giatto's school, and it was natural enough that the conversation between these young people should turn upon school reminiscences. Her new friend gave a most glowing description of all that she had learned, of the happy home it had been to her while there, and the ties of friendship she had formed, that Violet was delighted, and upon hearing that the terms were not equal to what was being paid to her own governess, she determined to ask permission to finish her education at this celebrated institution.

Accordingly this same evening she went to her uncle's room to tell him the plans she had formed for the future, and beg of him to let her go to Canada.

He took a long time however before he would listen to her.

"Child," he said, "you do not know what you are asking. How can your mother spare you? and what is that you say about learning to help yourself? You are as dear to me as my own

children, and as long as your uncle has a home you shall share it with him."

"I know that, dear uncle," replied Violet, "but perhaps I may be a greater help when I come back, as my health may be improved. Miss Ford assured me that before going to school she had been a very delicate girl, but the change has been so beneficial to her, and she is now so healthy and strong that she is not like the same person; and mamma does not want me so much now. I think she is getting better, and nurse can do all she may require."

"But how can you live so far from us, you who never spent a day from home without having some of us with you?" asked her uncle.

"It will be rather lonely, dear uncle," replied Violet, "but then the expense is much less than what you pay Mademoiselle Shelby, and the advantages are greater, so please let me go, and I will try hard to learn all that is to be learned there, and Miss Ford tells me that no one is home-sick, all are so kind and attentive to every wish, and vie with each other in trying to make

the first entree agreeable, and the Lady-Principal herself is like a mother to them."

Mr. Temple held this little maiden at arm's length, to assure himself that it was really his sweet Violet who was pouring forth her words like an orator.

At last however it was settled she should go, if she could obtain her mother's permission.

Mrs. Grant demurred strongly at first, but like her brother, had to give in; but thinking Violet the strangest girl alive, to want to leave a good home, and go to a boarding school among strangers, when she might learn all she required at home with her governess. Ah! how little did she know of the real nature of her little daughter, who at her early age formed the idea of trying to save her dear kind uncle, who in order to find them in luxuries, had impoverished himself, and as if with a dim foreboding of dark days coming, was trying in some measure to guard against it, by learning self-reliance in a school of which she had heard so much; and receiving those qualifications, which might not

only enable her to take care of herself, but also her dear mother.

When the cousins first heard of it they were quite annoyed at the thought of her going, and tried their influence against it, but nothing could change Violet's resolution, and so all was settled; and in the following September she was sent under a safe escort (a friend of her uncle's who had business in Upper Canada), who did not lose sight of her till he had placed her under the protecting care of Madame Giatto.

It was a sore parting from her mother and the rest of the family, but Violet was a brave child, and although she had to restrain her tears, so as not to add to her mother's sorrow, she felt that it was very, very hard to part for the first time from those we love. She was sadly tried now, and wept bitterly nearly the whole of her journey till nearing Canada, when she roused herself once more, so as not to present herself at her new home with a tear-stained face.

She was the last new pupil, and her arrival caused quite a stir in the school; and being the last who came that term, she had to occupy the

same room that Grace Morton and Maude Melville had. And a few days later, by some change, Minnie Davies made a fourth addition; and for two years these four young ladies shared the same apartment, and became firm friends from the beginning, sharing each other's joys and trials; but I should add that Grace Morton for some time repelled their kindly advances. She loved Maude very much, who, till Violet's arrival, had shown her exclusive attention; but now that it was necessary that another should share some of this kindness, a feeling of jealousy sprang up, and her heart, which had begun to melt a little, closed again. Oh how many miserable hours did that unhappy girl make not only for herself, but her really amiable companions. And for what? Because they had extended to a young and lovely stranger (the first time from home) that welcome and kindness that she herself only a short time previous had been the sole recipient of; but I am happy to say a change for the better did take place under the happy influence shed around, and Grace began to see her own selfishness in its proper light. This one

step in the right direction led to others, so that in two years, who could recognise in that sweet, quiet and lady-like girl, the once proud and lofty Miss Morton.

There is work for the heart, as well as work for the head, and work for the fingers too. And if we can persuade anyone to take that up, and to strive in daily life to be more patient, and meek and unselfish, our teaching will be of more lasting value than if it were mere earthly knowledge.

It was in this way that unconsciously our little Violet became Grace's teacher. You could not be intimate with her without observing and admiring her good qualities. She was so watchful over her words and temper, so humble, and ready to oblige others at her own expense, that it was impossible to be often in her society and not feel ashamed of your own pride and anger, and self-pleasing; and yet she was not aware of any direct influence on her part, and that she was doing Grace any good. Indeed her opinion of herself was so lowly, that the idea of being of any benefit to Miss Morton would have seemed

presumptuous to her; nor would Grace probably have listened to her advice, however correct, or well meant from one younger, and as she thought inferior to herself.

The small and sober-coloured little Violet would be seldom seen and rarely heeded, were it not for the exquisite perfume which it cannot help diffusing all around. Thus it was with the little flowret's lovely namesake; modest and retiring, she spread an influence around without knowing it. She became much beloved by the teachers, as well as all the pupils of the school.

Do you know my dear readers to what cause we may attribute so much goodness in Violet's disposition, apart from her own natural good qualities; it was that she had learnt to know and love her Saviour, and in loving and looking to Him, who was meek and lowly, she had become (poor weak and sinful child as she was) meek and lowly too. "Oh, will you not my dear young friends, follow in our Violet's footsteps?"

As school duties progressed, it was easy to perceive that no one entered into its various requirements with so much zest as Violet Grant,

Of a naturally enquiring turn of mind, she would know the *why* and *wherefore* of everything, and asked so many questions they good humouredly styled her *Miss Inquisitive*. Her questioning did not arise from impertinent curiosity, but a great desire on our favourite's part to gain necessary information, so that at the end of the first week she seemed to know more of the school and school discipline than others who had been there for months. A few days after her arrival she went, in company with Maude and Minnie, on a tour of inspection through the house, visiting every room, and observing everything, when, in one of the large corridors, her quick eye perceived a box fastened to the wall; it looked like a child's sayings' bank, and on closer inspection her astonishment was great on perceiving in large letters the words "SELF-DENIAL" written above it.

"Oh, what is in this box, dear," asked Violet;
"and what is the meaning of these words?"

"Why don't you know what it means," asked Maude.

"Yes, I know well enough what the words

mean, but why are they placed over this box. Tell me all about it?"

"This box belongs to us all," replied Minnie Davies, "and serves for many good purposes. Whenever we are tired of spending money for our own gratification, that is for things such as sweets, oranges, &c., if we can deny ourselves, we put what we would have spent in this box, which in the course of a few months receives a great deal; and if we are called upon during the term to give something to a charitable purpose, we can always find something in this box to gladden the heart of some soul. Nor is this all, we often make a present out of it to our teachers. And among ourselves, Violet, I assure you this box contains a good many pleasures for us in the year."

"I should think so," replied Violet, with eyes dimmed with tears; "it is so sweet to give. Don't you ever buy sweets, Minnie?"

"Oh yes, very often," replied that young lady laughing; "but you see ever since this box was started, if I want to buy something of the sort, instead of spending, as I used to do, twenty cents,

I make ten do me, and put ten in the box; and a good many go in of mine during the year."

"Who instituted it?" enquired Violet.

"I think it was Maude who first proposed it, seconded by Susie Heasil, approved by Cora Ford, and sanctioned by all the pupils in the house, and permitted by the Lady-Principal," replied Minnie.

"Well, I should feel as if I would not like to spend a cent," replied Violet, "but just put it all in here."

"You must not do that," said Maude. "You must not let your desire to do good carry you too far the other way. You will often find it quite unavoidable to spend a little money in company with your school-fellows, but there is reason in all things. And many here would be far happier, if they could sometimes deny themselves a little for the sake of others. Yes, and would not injure their health so much as they do by eating so many sweets. I will show you something else we do," said Maude, leading the way to another aperture, and opening a large cupboard in the wall, which was covered with shelves, on

which some cast-off dresses lay. "See here," said she, "we put our cast-off clothing on these shelves, and once a month we repair, or cut them up for children. And at the end of every term they are left till Christmas comes, and we give them to the poor of this parish, for there are many needy ones in it; and many poor children would feel the cold more, if we did not produce something to keep them warm."

Oh, how Violet drank in every word that was said. She who had always had such a desire to be doing good, there was ample scope for her here. Many rickety old stairs had she mounted in her native town to bring comfort to some old bed-ridden man or woman, and whose hearts were often gladdened by her presents bought out of her own pocket-money, and which many others would have spent for their own gratification. But with her this principle was engraven on her heart, "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" and it made her unspeakably happy to think that here she should have companions who would think and act with her.

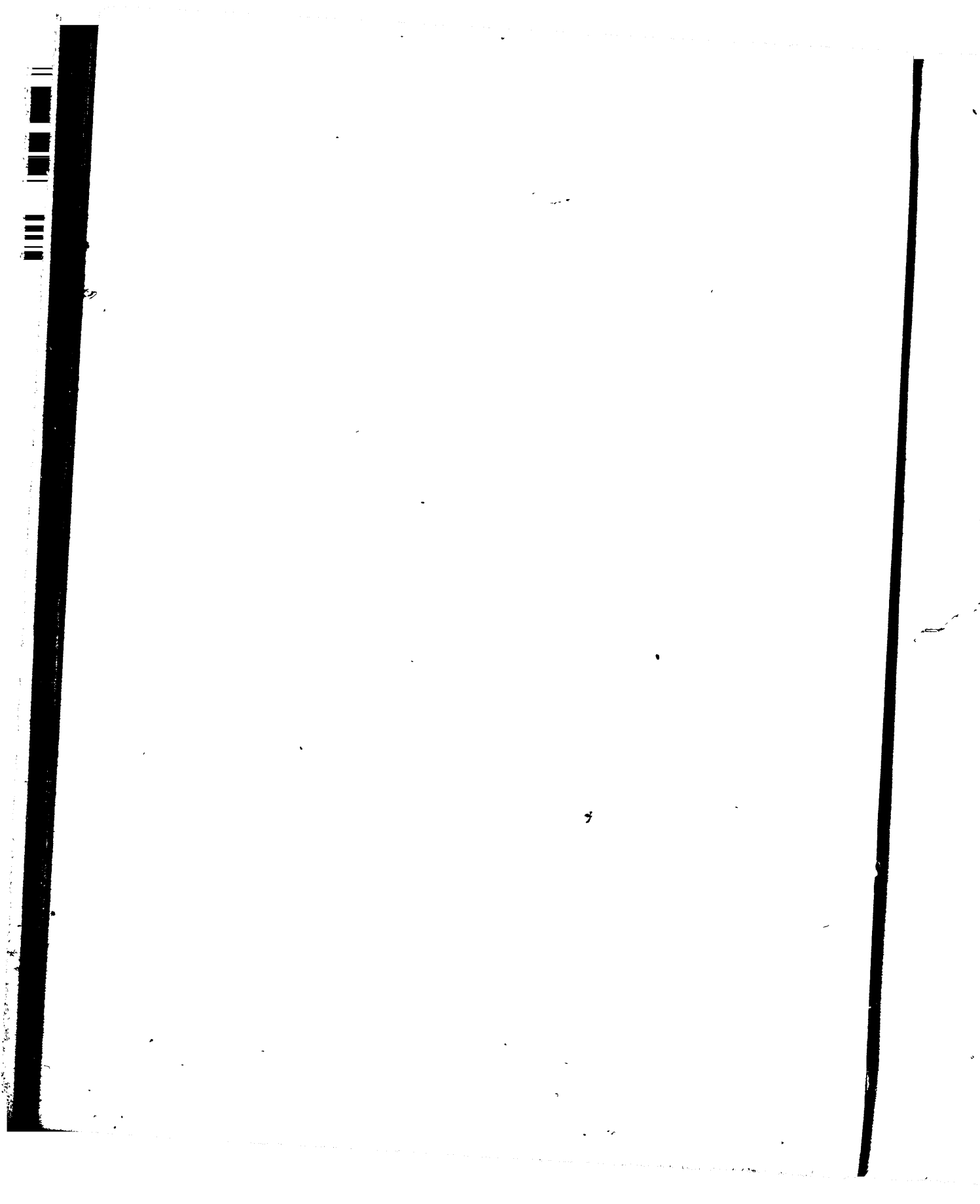
"Do all the girls put something in the box,

and do you all give some clothes in the course of the year?"

"Well, no; I am sorry to say some do not give anything, either in money or clothes, here as elsewhere. We are not without selfishness, but our motto is, 'hope on,' 'hope always.' And perhaps some plan may yet be found, that the few who keep themselves from us, may yet join our party," replied Minnie Davies.

The time and the plan of which Minnie was so hopeful was not far distant, but we must not anticipate.







CHAPTER IV.

DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

IN a large room on the ground floor, which was fitted up with all necessary requisites, were some half-dozen young ladies assembled to prepare their Wednesday's dinner. On each successive Wednesday the entire management of this meal was left to them, under the superintendence of Madame Miller. Among the group was Violet Grant, just now, with her sleeves neatly turned back, kneading some bread dough, which, with the addition of sugar, and a little butter, she was forming into cakes for tea. Others were paring apples, cleaning vegetables, &c., and working so earnestly and cheerfully as if they fully understood what they were about, and had been accustomed to it all their lives; instead of which there

were others besides Violet who had never entered this department before, and were quite ignorant of how anything was prepared, not even knowing whether potatoes were cooked in milk or water. This day, which had long been set apart for this praiseworthy purpose, was looked forward to by those engaged in it with especial pleasure. And if occasionally a black sheep came among them, they tried their united influence to overcome her scruples, so that frequently this discontented one would turn out the cleverest among them.

On this particular day, Maude asked Grace if she would not join the class, as her own immediate friends were in it.

"No indeed, I will not," replied Grace; "nor any other class of such degrading work. I wonder you have the heart to ask me."

"I shall not ask you again, depend upon it," replied Maude; "but pray do not call anything that is taught here by such a name. I am only sorry that I took the trouble to ask one, who has yet to learn how to behave herself to those who are kind to her." So saying, Maude left the room, leaving Grace to her own reflections,

which were not of the best. No sooner had the door closed than she would have given anything to have recalled those hasty words. What if Maude should withdraw her love from her. "Oh! why did she ever come here. Why was papa so unkind as to send me?"

But was he really unkind, or was it in herself that all the blame lay. She had in a letter to her mother related her grievances to her, but the answer was far from cheering. Her mother told her she was entirely without influence.

"I cannot think," she added, "what has come to your father. But when your letter came, and your aunt and I said you should not remain in such a place, he became quite angry and said, 'You should stay as long as he thought it necessary for you. In fact,' said he, 'till she has become a useful woman, and not merely a walking clothes-horse that knew nothing or wanted to know anything except to decorate her person. And I dare either of you to encourage her in her stubbornness, for if I find it out, she shall not come home for a year.'"

"Only think of this my dear child, but you

must not tell him again what I have told you, and I shall enclose twenty dollars for you, so that you can buy something nice for yourself; and Aunt Jane will send you some more next month. And Christmas will soon be here, and if I have you home once more, I will not let you go again."

This was part of Mrs. Morton's letter to her daughter, and that it did but little good we need hardly add. But a letter from her father was very different, and caused her such a night of weeping that she nearly made herself ill. And yet there was not one word in it that did not tell of the deep love he had for his only child, but this love had not made him blind to her faults, and he had wisely chosen for the future, which a selfish and thoughtless mother had neglected. Many times did she read this letter, and it certainly had the effect of changing her, for she became day by day more docile and willing for application, and less inclined to find fault with what was required of her. And when she wrote home again, it was in a far more cheerful strain, and as if she was learning a lesson of

contentment—a lesson she might have learnt long ago, could she have viewed her surroundings in a proper light. All were studiously kind to her, far more so than she deserved.

Let us return now to our young ladies whom we left so busily engaged in the kitchen. Doubtless by this time the dinner is near its completion, for at twelve they dine, and it must be close upon that time now. The savoury odour tells of some nice dishes preparing, and we take the liberty of having a peep round the stove, to see what they have in the space of three hours accomplished. There are several large pans upon the stove, besides a large crock, which by the smell, contains some delicious soup, made from the bones of the three previous days joints. One pan contained potatoes, done in a new way, an invention of one of our lady-cooks, and relished very much better than the ordinary plain cooking in water. In another pan a young lady is preparing some savoy in the German style; while another is frying some meat balls, for which they used up all kinds of meat left from previous days; in fact, they used up in general,

what careless servants would otherwise throw away, and they thus by this means saved many dollars in the year to the school, besides learning to become thrifty housewives for the future.

In the oven are some nice joints of roast, which each of them knew how long it would take to do to a turn; besides pans of cakes which we saw Violet Grant making when we first looked in the room. In a steamer are some apple dumplings ready to be served; while around the stove are plates and dishes warming by the time all is ready for the table. We all know that the serving up of a meal is as important a part as the cooking; if a table is nicely set, and the plates and dishes brought nice and hot, no matter how plain the fare, it is much more palatable than the best meal served in a slovenly way; and it is just so with the carving. A joint nicely cut goes much farther than one cut and hacked to pieces, and the ladies in this establishment, I am happy to say, so well understood this art that they could compete with the best carver in the town.

When all was ready, the six young ladies of

whom we have been speaking, retired to their rooms, stripping off their cotton wrappers which served merely as a covering to their other dresses, and by paying a little attention to their toilet, were by the time the bell rang in perfect order and good taste, ready to sit down with their companions.

Dinner being over, they then went into the class-room. Not one lesson had been neglected through their morning's occupation; one duty was not put aside for another; on the contrary, by a little forethought, their lessons were learnt previously, and repeated to a governess, thus losing nothing and gaining much useful knowledge.

It was a pleasant sight to see so many young ladies, daughters of rich and influential people, learning to be useful, and preparing themselves for those changes of fortune which come alike to all. And what a prospect for the sons of Canada, should they in the future ever be fortunate enough to obtain the hand of any of my fair young friends; in them they will certainly find a real help-meet.

As people must have something besides dinner, you may be sure that on Wednesdays they also had a good tea; in fact by their joint efforts they always had something additional, which did not cost more than plain bread and butter would have done, and afforded a wholesome relish too. Young people like changes of any kind, and you may be sure a slice of plain cake one evening, roast or stewed apples another, and a tasty salad the next, formed an agreeable change for youthful palates, and cost no more than if these things were withheld from them. They made the salad themselves, and had it two or three times a week all the year round. The vegetables were grown in the school garden, and those required for winter use were stowed away in plenty, so that beets and celery, with warm potatoes sliced, made a delicious salad for one evening, and white cabbage sliced formed a change for another, and eats very nicely with bread and butter, and gives great satisfaction.

Nothing that could be turned to account in this well regulated establishment was ever wasted. There were home made pickles and

catsup in abundance, and of a quality that would have done credit to the London houses which supply the market, and though there was always this variety on hand, it was at a far less cost than at some schools I could mention, where I have seen an expensive dinner both badly cooked and badly served, and where the barrel in the yard kept for refuse, often received wholesome food thrown away by the servants, that would go a great way towards supporting a small family in comfort, but it was not so here. There were too many bright eyes under the supervision of their excellent Superintendent to overlook the proceedings in the servant's department, and each year could show a material surplus after defraying expenses, and all is attributable to the order and economy with which it is conducted, and has earned for it the well merited reputation of being the best school in the Dominion of Canada.

The same principle instilled into these young minds extended itself to their dress; their Preceptress encouraged them in the greatest simplicity, and their appearance both at home and abroad was always in their favour, and when

they appeared in public for their usual walk, their appearance and lady-like deportment was very striking, and many admiring glances were bestowed upon them, and followed their movements.

Time passed on without any great change amongst my young friends; they continued daily aiming at self-improvement, and contributing all they could to each others happiness and comfort. As Winter advanced they spent many delightful evenings, and Susie Heasel, who was always on the look-out for something new, had been reading "Home life in Germany," and had been deeply impressed by it. To a German the celebration of the natal day is of great importance, and never neglected under any circumstances. Each is remembered on this particular occasion. From the grey-haired grandfather to the little infant-in-arms there is always a present—though sometimes a trifling one—with a home-made plain cake presented, and if in summer it is surrounded with a wreath of flowers, probably wild ones; still there is a charm thrown over it all which makes these days

very pleasant for young and old, and is generally closed by having a few friends in the evening to tea. All this had impressed Susie very much, and she proposed that they should celebrate each other's birthday there, and make a present to whoever it may be, purchased from the money that came out of the box "*Self Denial*," and have a small festival in the evening in honour of it.

Madame G. was referred to, who was always ready to contribute to their happiness if it did not interfere with school duties; she therefore willingly gave her consent, and promised that for each birthday they should make a large cake, and invite one or two of their outside friends to tea, and as there were so many of them, a birthday was in constant anticipation. It gave a great deal of pleasure, and united them more closely together than they had ever been before. A present was always made without exception, even to those who had not contributed to their little box ; it generally consisted of a pair of gloves, a necktie, or something similar, and on the tea table was placed a large, substantial cake

of their own making, and they spent the evening afterwards in all kind of amusements. These evenings were very pleasant to witness, and brought about many good results. The few, and amongst them was Grace Morton, must have felt considerably humbled when upon the morning of each of their birthdays they received a small and useful present, accompanied with the best wishes of their companions.

Christmas is near at hand, and preparations are made for returning home for the holidays. Grace of course was amongst the number; and now let us follow this young lady to see what becomes of her, and whether she looks upon home as she once did. Her mother warmly welcomed her back, and often expressed a wish that she might never leave them again; how great was her astonishment therefore, when one morning after having been home only a little while she expressed a desire to return to school. It appears that their two maid servants had been discharged for misconduct, and for some days Mrs. Morton could not get any one to suit her, and even then had to put up with a charwoman,

which we all know is a poor resource in a well regulated house; she left in the evening, and was often late in the morning, and the discomfort that reigned around was too evident to Grace, who had seen nothing of the kind during her school-days. She could now see her own helplessness in an emergency like this, and it was with regret that she thought of the opportunities neglected. Once or twice she had seen her dear father making himself a cup of tea, previous to starting out on a cold winter's morning. This he had to do for himself or go without, and there were three women in the house incapable of turning their hands to anything.

Grace was thankful that she could at least make her bed, and tidy up her room, and this she did with a hearty good-will, and while so engaged made a vow in her own mind that she would return to school, and cheerfully learn all that was to be taught there; and watching for the first occasion to speak to her father, she told him of the change within herself, and what she had determined to do. "God bless you, my dear child," he said, "I am indeed thankful to

hear you say so, and may you have help given you from above to carry out your good resolutions, and when your education is finished, your poor father will not have to go to a restaurant, because he cannot get anything to eat in his own house."

From the time of our heroine returning to school after the holidays may be termed a new era in her existence. She was greatly changed, and looked upon her school duties in a different light to what she had done. She now requested to be allowed to join the class for domestic economy in which her room-mates were, but this class was filled up. She had therefore to join another, which was a slight mortification to her, and she was tempted to rebel; but Grace had come to school with a determination to overcome obstacles, and was keeping a strict watch over herself, and on this occasion submitted with a better grace than could have been expected. This was her first submission, and let us watch with a loving interest the happy results we may look forward to from this one step in the right direction.

On presenting herself down stairs for the first time, she caused quite a commotion—her objections to this department had been so often and openly expressed. And the other young ladies already assembled there could hardly believe their own eyes, when Grace, in a new cotton wrapper and linen apron, entered the room with Madame Miller.

“Oh my,” cried Susie Heasel, “is the millenium come, or what is up to see Miss Morton here amongst us?”

“Hush,” said Cora Dunbar, “don’t say anything to vex her, rather try to encourage her in her efforts to do right.” And turning to Grace said, “I am so glad you have come; will you help me to make this dough, and I will show you how to do it.”

Grace was very glad to accept Cora’s proposal, and soon her arms were immersed in a large dish, working some bread dough with all her might, which she soon, under Cora’s direction, formed into loaves. It is true her little white hands ached a little from this unusual exertion, but she did not heed it, and worked on with a

will for three hours as well as the rest. And when the loaves were baked, and came out of the oven looking so nice and smelling so delicious, Grace experienced a satisfaction she had never felt before, and longed for the time when she should be making some favorite delicacy for her father.

“Where there is a will there is a way,” and Miss Morton by her perseverance soon became quite an adept in the art of cooking. And she who had so long stood aloof, began to feel a little pride in her proficiency; and when a little spare time presented itself, none were so ready as herself to prepare some nice biscuit or cake for tea, which they all enjoyed. And she was so anxious to excel that she made memorandums very often, that she might have them to refer to in case her memory did not serve her.

How her three friends rejoiced in the change. They loved her truly, and the good qualities she really possessed expanded themselves day by day. Endowed as she was naturally with good sense, it would have been sad had she still persisted in her repulsive behaviour.

On one occasion shortly afterwards Maude Melville found her crying bitterly, and while endeavouring to soothe her, tried to find out the cause of her grief. "Oh," she answered, "I have to-day been induced to spend money which I had intended and promised to put into the box, and I saw Violet look at me quite shocked because I had broken my promise. And now I expect they will all call me a mean thing."

"Hush, hush," replied Maude, "we do not use such language towards each other. We may feel sorry that you could not deny yourself a little to put in the box, especially as I think you have never yet done so; but still we will hope it was merely thoughtlessness on your part, and we are all apt to be a little given that way. And it is only God who can help us, dear Grace, to overcome our weaknesses. Do you ever think of that?"

Grace being silent, Maude continued. "Do you ever pray, dear Grace, for we can do nothing without His help?"

"I could not be a hypocrite," she answered,

"and kneel down and ask for what I do not feel that I need."

"But you do want it," said Maude.

Grace still remained silent.

"Look here," went on Maude, "God tells us to give him our hearts, and we cannot do that of ourselves; but He will help us, and has promised to do so if we ask Him. It is to Him we must carry our shortcomings, and implore forgiveness, and also grace and strength to assist you all the day long. I know you would never have forgotten yourself the other day as you did to Miss Mowbray, had you asked the Lord for help and strength. Violet was very grieved when she witnessed your rudeness to your teacher, and I think you should try all in your power to make some amends. I know I am inconsistent myself, but I should be worse if I did not feel my own weakness, and ask for help day by day. Now I know you hate meanness, tell me what you would think of a girl who would come to you every time she got into a scrape, asking your help, and would never speak to you any other time?"

“Why I should despise her; and if I helped her once, I would not the second time.”

“And yet that is the way you will act; you will go to Him in trouble, but not at any other time.”

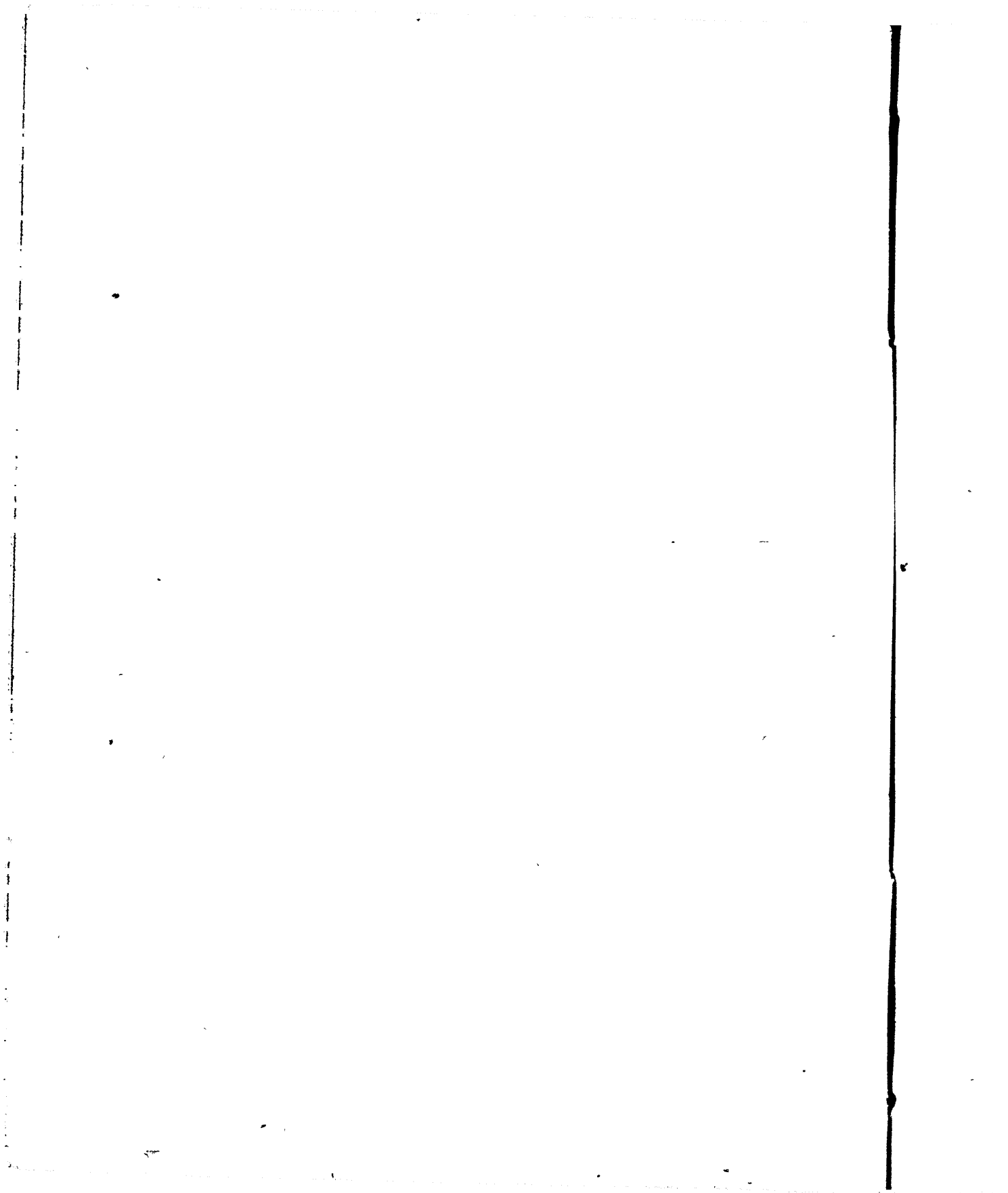
These words struck home very forcibly, and she could not but in her own mind thank her friendly monitor for them. She determined to profit by them. Hitherto she had served the Lord with her lips only, but now she would seek Him with her whole heart; and that night in the silence of her chamber, arose a petition to the Throne of Heaven asking for help, strength, and forgiveness, from one who for the first time in her life had felt how weak and erring she had been.

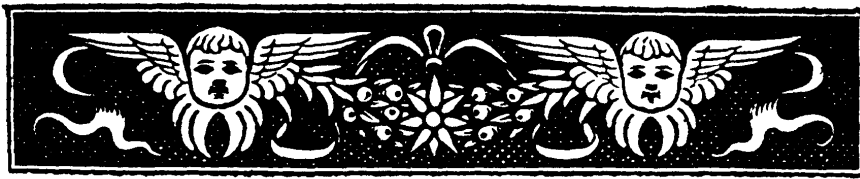
Very soon a great change in dear Grace's life began; she had found the Lord and served Him; and when in after years, dark hours clouded her earthly prospect, she could look beyond to a brighter future, and though she might endure heaviness for a season, she *knew* that there was an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved for her in Heaven.

When life's trials assail you, my dear reader, will these sweet consolations be yours? When your little barque is tossed up and down on life's rough ocean, have you this hope, which is like an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast?

In what a different light do we now look upon our beloved heroine. Is it possible the Grace of to-day is the Miss Morton I introduced to my readers. Not any in the school are so kind and thoughtful for others as she is. If any difficulty or dispute arises, she is the first to come forward and try to make peace. Should a new pupil arrive, who at first may feel shy and awkward, Grace, by her gentle influence, would do all in her power to make her feel quite at ease. There was one fresh arrival; a bright eyed girl—perhaps I might have said young lady—who possessed an assurance and independence of manner, which is far from becoming even in those twice her age. It is to be regretted that modern society a little encourages this in young people, for boys and girls are apt to greet their seniors with as much freedom and composure as if they were fully their age.

Mabel Field, to whom I am now referring, had been spoiled by this kind of treatment ; she was fond of big words, or rather slang words—"frightful!" "awful!" "by gosh!"—was frequently on her lips. Young people often fancy they strengthen what they say by exaggerated expressions, but it is a great error. To improve this spoilt child Grace set to work, but did not find it so easy a task ; bad habits are not easily broken, and poor Mabel had often been laughed at at home for what they thought her clever sayings, but now she was to be corrected for them. But Mabel could not long resist Grace's gentle influence, who tried to show her how much nicer it was to be polite and gentle to all ; to endeavour all in her power to gain the love and confidence of her teachers, and to give them no unnecessary trouble ; and above all, to watch herself as she had done. By degrees Mabel began to show signs of improvement, and if through thoughtlessness she was betrayed into any of her bad habits, one look from Grace was a sufficient reproof to her, and she would beg pardon for what she had done.





CHAPTER V.

A GREAT SURPRISE.

A few days previous to Miss Morton's birthday, the Lady-Treasurer, as was customary now on these occasions, went to the box "Self-denial," to make an inspection, and to draw from it the sum required for the purpose we have before hinted at. Judge of her surprise on first perceiving three English sovereigns disposed at the top. She immediately called the attention of other young ladies, who were equally surprised as well as pleased; and they agreed that no other than Grace Morton would have done it, as she was the only one with so much money at her disposal. This act raised her very much in their estimation. The news of it spread like wild-fire through the house: every one was speaking of it, but not a word was breathed in

Grace's presence, because, as Maude said, "she doubtless does not wish it known, therefore let us say nothing about it."

But that evening on giving Grace her good night kiss, she whispered, "God bless you, dear Grace, and keep you in the right path;" turning her head away, however, to prevent her seeing the tears of joy that glistened in her eyes.

A long debate was held to determine upon what present to make Grace, and some thought it should be something of a very superior kind; but Violet said, "No! why should we bestow more on her than on others? Grace herself would not wish it. I think a book would be very suitable. She has every article of dress that could be desired, and only a few books of her own."

Thus it was decided, and on the morning of her birthday, a handsomely bound book, entitled "The True Woman," was presented to her, and received with every mark of pleasure from companions, who one and all most heartily wished her "many happy returns of the day."

Later in the day she received a handsome

brooch and ring from home, accompanied by a large hamper, containing good things for her to celebrate the day with her companions. Such a feast none of them could have anticipated ; preserved fruits and cakes of every description were there, and many other things quite too numerous to mention. In the evening the tea-table was set out with all these delicacies, and decorated with flowers. Grace's joy was unbounded to see the joy and happiness diffused around, and all out of love and compliment to herself. Many times at home had she entertained large parties on these particular days; but never had she felt so thankful or so happy as on this one.

It does not require handsome gifts or costly entertainments to ensure happiness, and a dollar spent in Madame Giatto's school for the benefit of another, often gave more real pleasure than a larger sum spent in an indifferent way; and may the participators on these festive occasions be enabled in after years to refer to them as happy epochs in their school life—to be remembered, and the custom retained in their own homes wherever they may be.

Our little box that has been the source of so much good, having received such a liberal addition to its funds, and our dear young friends still encouraging themselves in "self-denial" (in spite of the many birthdays), it contained quite a nice sum to devote to charitable purposes, which with the aid and advice of Madame Giatto, was disposed of wisely. Some was given to poor and deserving families, whose misfortunes were personally known to them; and a sum in reserve was presented to one of the charitable institutions of the town. Thus did this amiable lady encourage the practice of true virtue among the pupils entrusted to her charge; and above in Heaven, where every good deed is registered, will the names of those brave, noble-hearted girls be found, who by a little self-denial, laid up treasures for themselves in Heaven.

During the winter months a sleighing party was proposed into the country, and all were on the *qui-vive* for enjoyment, but Grace Morton who had always been first and foremost in every kind of extravagance, could now hardly be induced to join the party, on the score of not spend-

ing money unnecessarily, but Violet Grant whom we all know was generous to a fault, told her it would not be kind to spoil her companion's pleasure.

"But dear Violet," said she, "you do not know how foolish and extravagant I have been with money entrusted to my care, and now I feel as if I wanted to make up for past follies."

"And so you can," said Violet, "you have a long life before you; and the lessons you have learned will never be forgotten, but in this instance something is due to your companions, and it is not exactly spending money upon yourself, but rather for their benefit, for you know they will not enjoy themselves so much if you are not of the party."

Upon this Grace decided to go; it was a delightful party, and the day most propitious—one of those glorious winter days, that Canada alone can boast of, a beautiful blue sky overhead, and the snow lying thick upon the ground everywhere; the sleigh with its merry occupants, and its tinkling bells, gliding over the snow with a swiftness marvellous to behold. It would have startled the equanimity of some English people,

could they have come unexpectedly upon this picturesque *turn-out*; the young ladies in their different winter costumes, looking the very pictures of health and happiness, and singing merrily at the top of their voices, on their homeward drive; and besides the enjoyment they had, the ride through the bracing frosty air, had strengthened and refreshed them to renew their studies and other pursuits, for it was a rule that no pleasure must be indulged in at the expense of a duty, and such was the healthful tone of this school, that few had to be reminded of what their duties were; but it must not be presumed there were no idlers; on the contrary there were some listless ones, who tried their teachers patience very much, and who would have lagged behind in everything, had it not been for the kind and timely assistance so often proffered by the amiable young ladies who form so conspicuous a part in my story.

The long winter evenings sped along so pleasantly, that spring came before they were aware of it, and already one could often see a group of young ladies discussing and preparing

the dress necessary for a change of season, and it is surprising to see how handy and clever they mostly are, remodelling and cutting out to the latest style, making their old dresses look as good as new, and by this economy saving their friends at home a great deal of expense.

To Grace Morton this was quite a new lesson; her dresses had always been made by a fashionable dressmaker, whose charges were very high, and here she saw her companions, daughters of gentleman whose standing was equal to that of her own father's, making their own dress, and also neatly and well, and doing with as little help as they possibly could.

The first day Grace saw her companions so engaged she could but look on in amazement, and observing Susie Heasel with a suit on she had just made that was extremely becoming, she ventured to ask her if she would teach her how to make a wrapper for herself.

"Most willingly," replied Susie, "but have you the cloth for it?"

"No," said Grace; "but when we are out to-day I will buy it. How much will be required?"

"Ten yards I think; you require more than I do, you are so tall."

So in the afternoon the cloth was bought, and Susie cut it out and fitted it for Grace, but when it was put into her hands to make up, it was found that this young lady past seventeen could not use a needle—in fact had never done a stitch of sewing in her life. She had to put up with a little "chaffing," as it is sometimes termed, at wanting to make a dress, and did not know how to sew, but she took their jokes very quietly, and determined to learn. Maude, Minnie, and Violet came to the rescue, and helped her all in their power, and this, like many other lessons dear Grace had to learn, was accomplished in time, and she was in a fair way towards making her own garments.

Shortly after when writing to her mother this little incident was mentioned, but her mother instead of rejoicing, only fumed and fretted, as if she had done something wrong. She with many others did not think it fashionable for a young lady to learn to be useful. Oh how many foolish mothers are answerable for their daugh-

ter's wretchedness; when misfortune overtakes them, where are they? Helpless to an extreme; day after day, we see examples of girls with a training similar to this, their notions of ladyhood, will not allow them to do this or that, because it is beneath them; they often marry gentlemen of limited means, but still with an income which if turned to good account would support them, if not in luxury, at least in ease and comfort.

How often in after life does the young wife regret and even reproach the course her parents have pursued in her early training. Now that her natural instincts lead her to desire to be a comfort and help-meet to her husband, she feels her own helplessness; the butterfly existence she has hitherto led will not avail her now, and she has to make an effort that is beyond her ability to do. Her husband comes home, his brow is darkened, and oh! how her affectionate heart is grieved at this; there is not an effort she would not make to secure his smiles, if she only knew how, and she exclaims in bitterness of spirit, "Mother dear mother, why did

you not teach me all this, ere I took upon myself the sacred vow of wife."

And again in impressing upon the minds of my young friends the value of these household qualities. How often a husband is driven from home for the want of them; and very often even a worthless husband (if we may speak of anything so dreadful) is kept from utter destruction by the charms that an amiable and clever wife can throw around her household. Her exertions may be unwearied, and her efforts almost beyond her strength, but this solacing reflection is in store for her, "She hath done what she could."

Since dear Grace had become so useful and important a person in the school, she often would lie awake at night, thinking of her dear mother, and wondering why she objected to her gaining useful knowledge; she recalled her daily life at home, and wondered with her own changed ideas, how her mother would like it when she returned home for good. "Perhaps she will consent to be her child's pupil," thought Grace, "when she sees how clever I am, for I know she cannot do anything herself." Then the years of childhood

recurred to her, and thought of her dear mamma so young and handsome, beloved by a husband who almost idolized her, and who never even offered a shadow of reproach, though inwardly he grieved at her living so entirely for the world and its pleasures. The management of the house was left entirely to domestics. Mrs. Morton seldom left her room till after ten in the morning; she then spent some time over her breakfast, when the cook came to receive her orders for the day, and all was left entirely to her control, for Mrs. M. never went into the kitchen. It was near twelve before she was dressed, and then after luncheon visiting or shopping took place, or receiving visitors; then a late dinner, afterwards a party or concert for the evening, and coming home late. This was the usual routine day after day, except when a large party was given at home. Mr. Morton always went to his counting-house in the morning, long before his wife showed herself down stairs, there to make the money so lavishly spent by its mistress.

All this and much more did Grace call to mind.

She never remembered even to have seen her mother take a needle in hand, or even a little fancy work, which so many ladies delight in; and many a drawing-room would look bare, were it not for the tasteful display of work done by the mistress of the house.

Several hours were devoted every week to plain sewing and all kinds of needle work—the Lady-Principal herself superintending; and Grace who was alive to everything for self-improvement, soon became an adept in sewing. She had great abilities, and as the mind was not wanting to exert them, she really surprised her friends by the proficiency she made, and when, by Easter, she was able to make a walking-suit for a little girl in whom she was interested, out of an old dress of her own, she felt as much pleasure and satisfaction in what she had done, as the little girl had in receiving it.

So much useful work was done in the day, that our heroine began to wonder whether they were longer than formerly; but this childish notion was dispelled by her teacher, who told her “that the change was in herself, the careful,

industrious habits she was forming, enabled her to accomplish so much in so short a time ; and remember, dear Grace," added she, "this disposition of time is an important feature in the female character. Always keep regular hours ; have no spare minutes, and never turn night into day, or some duty on the following day will be neglected.

How many good resolutions she formed of what she would, and what she would not do, would take more time and space than we have at our disposal. Not a letter did she write home that had not in it some wise plan for the future, and it startled her mother so much, that she began to look forward to Grace coming home with dread rather than pleasure, for she had asked permission to bring her friend Violet with her at Easter, otherwise she would have to remain at school.

"Oh dear!" said Mrs. Morton, "I wish she would not ask such a thing. I suppose it is that little saint, whose goodness she is always raving about, and who, I think, has so turned Grace, that I shall not know my own child any more."

"You may depend upon it, it is the same," answered her sister; "but you cannot prevent it, your husband will not allow it. Thank goodness! I can do as I please," said this amiable spinster of fifty. "If ever I do marry, it must be a different man to your husband, my dear."

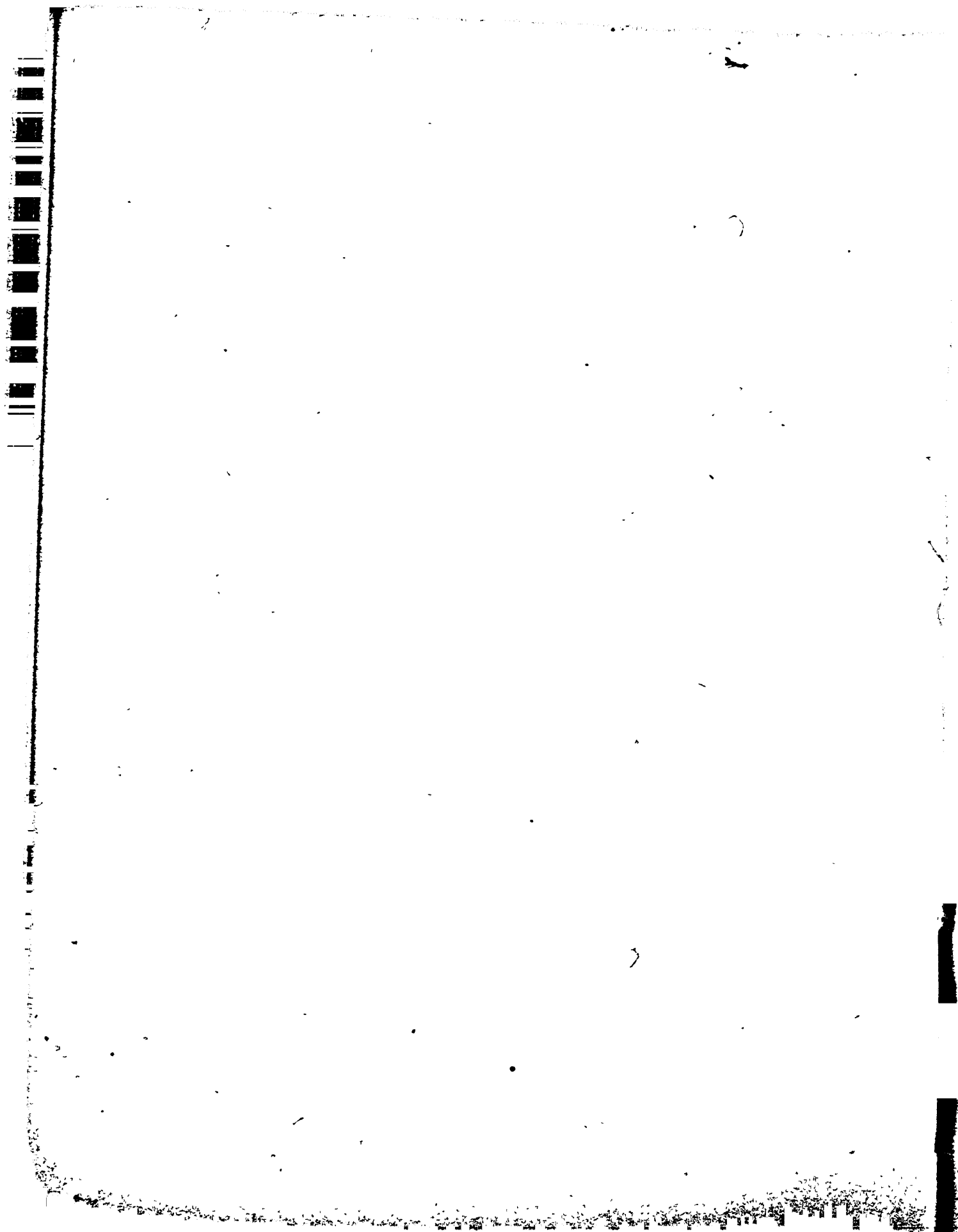
"Oh Charles has always been good to me," replied Mrs. Morton, "and it is only his queer Canadian notions that unsettle him."

"Well it is fortunate he is not my husband," said Aunt Jane, wiping her spectacles to see more clearly the folly of her younger sister marrying a gentleman from Canada, when she could have had her choice in London, and following him across the water, where Aunt Jane too followed them in after years, with the faint hope of some one taking compassion upon her single blessedness. Her many virtues and rare beauty had been so little appreciated in the old country, and feeling a little "on the shelf," she determined to try her fortune across the water too.

This addition to his family was anything but agreeable to Mr. Morton, who only sanctioned

her presence on his wife's account. He had tried in vain to get rid of her, as she exercised an undue influence over the wife he loved so well, but Aunt Jane remained stationary in spite of everything. And here she was at the age of fifty still using all the artifices that money could buy to keep away old age, in case the long expected suitor should arrive.







CHAPTER VI.

EASTER HOLIDAYS.

MR. MORTON was delighted when he heard that Grace wanted to bring Violet home with her. He at least knew what influence and example had done for his daughter, and was therefore anxious to make the acquaintance of one whom he had heard so much of, and he wrote to Grace to that effect.

"We shall be delighted to see all your friends," wrote he. "Can you not bring Miss Melville and Miss Davies also. I should much like to see these young ladies who have been so kind to my child. Let me know what day you come, and I shall meet you at Kingston."

And he was there when the train arrived, to bring Violet and Grace, whom he received with outstretched arms; and when Violet was pre-

sented, he gave her a warm welcome and imprinted a kiss on her brow, with the words, "God bless you, Miss Grant, for your kindness to my child."

Mrs. Morton was to have accompanied her husband to the station, for she was equally anxious to see her daughter; but upon second thoughts determined to receive them at home, as she had her friend with her.

"I think you are right," said her sister. "You will see enough of them I am thinking. I only hope this paragon of perfection will not bother me with her preaching."

But when the young ladies did arrive, who, in looking at these lovely girls, could indulge in uncharitable speculation. Their cheerful, happy faces, brought sunshine with them. Even Aunt Jane was obliged to admit that her niece was greatly changed for the better. And as for Violet, though a little afraid of her at first, we know they could not long withstand her gentle influence.

Both our young friends had gained physical health and strength in their Canadian home, and

everything around seemed to afford them intense enjoyment. When it was known they had arrived, a succession of visitors came to see them. Mrs. Morton's sister had spread it about that Miss Grant was a saint, and had so influenced her niece, that Grace wrote letters home like a parson; but they who came to see were obliged to admit that there was nothing very saintly looking in these merry, lovable girls, who had once been the spoilt children of fortune. Visits were exchanged, and wherever they went a lasting and pleasing impression was made upon their friends by their kind and affable manners. If a little homely game or dance was proposed, with what zest they entered into it, that they became favorites wherever they went, and their short stay was regretted, as their friends could not see enough of them. As a climax to their visit home, it was proposed that Grace should have a large party at her own house. Both she and Violet were pleased at this, as it gave them an opportunity of showing off some of their new accomplishments learned at school. They were very busy with their pre-

parations, and spent a whole day in the kitchen to the amusement of her mother and aunt, and the astonishment of the servants, making all kinds of dishes, and doing it as well as any professional cook would have done. Aunt Jane and mamma came down to the kitchen doorway out of curiosity to see if it were really true as Kate the housemaid had reported, that Miss Grace had on a large apron, and was cooking something that she called "Musliende-lain."

"A what?" cried Miss Jane.

"Now I think of it," replied Kate, "I think it was Charlotte something; but Miss Grace can do the stirring of it just like any cook."

"And what is Miss Grant about?" asked Mrs. Morton, who when they first came home had both seen and heard of their being up at seven in the morning, and had been told by the servants they had prepared breakfast themselves. This she attributed to Violet, and felt inclined to be angry; but who could be angry with so gentle a being, who was always doing something for others, rather than herself. How-

ever, the doings in the kitchen were really to much.

"Suppose we go right into the kitchen and see for ourselves," she said to her sister, "and then I can give the order for dinner." So both ladies presented themselves in the kitchen, to which aunt Jane was a perfect stranger, and Mrs. Morton nearly so.

They looked on in astonishment. There was Grace making a truffle and jellies, while Violet was lifting out of the oven numbers of different kinds of cakes, which spread a delicious odour far and wide.

"Well I never!" cried Aunt Jane, "Your faces will be the colour of lobsters by to-morrow, and can you ever expect your hands to be fit to be seen?"

"O yes aunty," said Grace, lifting up an almond cake to put into her mouth, "do taste this, and tell me if it is not as good as the confectioner makes."

"I dare say it is; but look at the labour, when you might have bought everything ready-made."

"Oh but it would cost twice as much, and

then it is a nice occupation for us to do it ourselves, and our hands will look as nice to-morrow as if we had never touched a thing; won't they Violet?"

"Yes, dear, soap and water is all that is required."

They saw it was no use to remonstrate with these young ladies, and therefore left them to themselves, while they returned to the drawing-room, where for a moment we will listen to their conversation.

Mrs. Morton threw herself into a chair, as if the exertion had been too much for her, while her sister was surveying herself in a mirror, rearranging her maiden curls, and hoping her complexion had not suffered from the heat to which she had exposed herself. At last she exclaimed, "Thank goodness I am not a mother! (we are thankful too,) or I don't know what I should do, to see my child amongst the servant's pots and kettles as if she were one of them. I do wonder Carry you have not more spirit than to allow such a thing."

"What can I do," replied Mrs. Morton, "you

know I am powerless; Grace herself likes it, so what can I do to prevent it?"

"Prevent it!" cried her sister, wiping her spectacles furiously before putting them on her venerable nose, "I would, I would, I don't know what I would——"

"No, nor nobody else does," said Mr. Morton, who had just come home and entered the house unperceived by either of the ladies.

"Charles, you home, what is the matter?" cried Mrs. Morton.

"Nothing, Carry, only I came home on purpose to see my child and her friend enjoying themselves in the kitchen, and was just in time to hear your sister's regrets that she is not the possessor of a husband, or a darling Grace like you are."

Miss Jane deigned no reply to this, but with an indignant toss of the head. It was touching a sore point to remind her, that much as she had tried, and others had tried for her, that with all her money, she was Aunt Jane still.

Mr. Morton left the room, and hurried into the kitchen, and the sounds of ringing laughter

that followed showed that the young ladies were fairly caught. He stopped there much longer than his wife and sister had done; Grace had some fun showing him all the good things they had made, and making him taste them to give his approval, which he did to their satisfaction. On his return to the drawing-room he said to his wife, "Carry, I have promised to give Grace and her friend a ride after luncheon; will you go with us, and your sister too?" added he, turning towards this lady, who however declined.

"Well I should think they would rather go to bed," said Mrs. Morton; "however, if they like it, I suppose I need not mind. I will go if I am not too tired."

She could not have said what had tired her, except that since the arrival of the two young ladies, Grace had made a point of trying to induce her mother to get up for breakfast; at first she would not listen to her, but Grace would persist.

"Come, dearest mamma, my darling mother, do get up and have breakfast with your own

Grace ; I will help you to dress ; Fanny is having her own breakfast."

"O leave me alone Grace, I will get up when Fanny comes," answered Mrs. Morton.

"But it will be too late then ; Papa will be gone, and I bet him a dollar I would bring you,"

"Never mind, I will give you a dollar ; only leave me a little longer, I am so tired," replied her mother.

"You can lie down after lunch," said Grace ; "it is not nice to sit down to breakfast without you, dear mamma, so do rise."

Mrs. Morton at last rose, and did so for several successive mornings, but after having indulged herself in late rising for so many years, it was hard work at first to rouse herself at the time required.

To make up for this loss of rest, which she seemed to think so necessary for her health, Mrs. Morton took Grace's advice, and lying on the sofa had a good sleep before lunch time, and on the day to which we are referring, as there was to be a drive in the afternoon, and feeling a

little more tired than usual, she went to lie down, and had been asleep about an hour, when Grace and Violet having finished their preparations down stairs, came up to dress, and their ringing laugh awakened her.

Grace came dancing into the room, but was stopped short by her mother, who, in no amiable mood said, "well can you not let me have a little rest, after driving me out of bed at daylight."

"Forgive me, dear mamma, I did not know you were asleep; I was just trying a new step I want to introduce to-morrow evening, but now as you are awake will you just look."

She turned and twisted herself around the room, that she made Mrs. Morton's head swim, and nearly set her aunt distracted.

"Oh dear! oh dear!" cried she, "if this is to be the order of the day, the sooner I pack up my things and leave for the old country the better."

"Why, aunty," said Grace, "what is the matter, do you not like dancing?"

"Yes, I do like dancing; but not such new fangled things as these. In my time it was very

different; but as this is Canada, we need not wonder at any absurdity."

"Now aunty, that is too bad. You must not say a word against Canada; it is far before Old England, of which you are so proud; at least I think so, and it is papa's and my native home."

So saying she caught hold of her aunt, and gave her a kiss and a hug, which disarranged all the little curls which had taken Fanny, the maid, so much time to arrange, to make her look as young as possible.

The drive in the afternoon was a great success. Mrs. Morton was not too tired to go. Grace and Violet were in high spirits, and sang a German song on the way, which they had learned at school. They were all a happy party. Mr. Morton looked and felt the happiest man on earth while sitting beside his charming companions, one of them being that daughter on whom so much affection and care had been bestowed. What a future there seemed opening to him, in a child so pleasing and amiable as she had now become; and all might be attributed to his own wisdom and judgment in deciding for her.

Upon arriving at home, Grace thoughtlessly bounced into the room where Aunt Jane sat, upsetting a chair and stepping on a little pet dog that was hidden from view, making him howl, and driving him for refuge behind his mistress's chair, and had Mr. Morton not been in the back-ground, Grace would certainly have had a severe rebuke ; but as it was, the poor lady could only lift up her hands and murmur, " Oh dear ! dear ! what is the world coming to ! "

" We had such a glorious ride, aunty ; what a pity you did not go, and I do feel as hungry as a hunter," said Grace, all in a breath.

" Yes it was indeed nice," said Mrs. Morton, " I don't know when I enjoyed a ride so much, and would you believe it, Jane, these girls have learnt that beautiful German ballad that you used to sing at school, ' In der Heimath ist es schön,' and sang it so prettily as we drove along ; they must sing it to you by and by ; but really I do think that drive has made me hungry too. I hope we can have tea at once," so saying she rang the bell and gave orders, when shortly after they sat down to a knife and fork tea, to which they

did ample justice, except Aunt Jane, who could not forget the many indignities she had received, besides her darling Nip had nearly come to grief through her niece's carelessness; but "music has charms," and after Grace and Violet had played some beautiful duets together, and began to sing her favorite song, "In der Heimath ist es schön," she softened a little; perhaps the beautiful words struck a chord in her heart, and days of "Auld Lang Syne" came back to her in full force, when she had still been young, and when parents, brothers and sisters, had all listened to her singing that self-same song; where were they now? Long ago that home had been broken up, when her parents had died, and her brothers were in different parts of the globe. One sister was married in England, the other in Canada. All were happy in their different relationships; she was the only one who stood alone in the world, provided with ample means for support. She had nothing to do, nothing to live for, except her dog and cat.

When the last strain of the song had died

away, she rose, and going to the piano, kissed both girls, and thanked them.

"I think those German ballads are so pretty, and you do pronounce the words so well. Who is your teacher at school?" she asked.

"Madame Goldschmit," replied Grace; "whenever our singing mistress gives us a German song, we carry it to Madame; and she not only teaches us to pronounce the words correctly, but also translates them to us, and that is the reason we know it so well."

"Thus in music and conversation a happy evening passed away, and as on the morrow a large party was expected, it was proposed to retire early, much to the chagrin of Aunt Jane, who liked to sit up half the night and have some one to talk to; but on this evening, after losing her pleasant companions, she soon tired of being alone, and therefore retired to her own room; and while on her way there, she had to pass the one occupied by Grace and Violet, and hearing voices, and the door being ajar, she ventured to listen, and even to peep in. What was it she saw that so startled her and rivetted her to the spot.

There in an attitude of prayer, both girls were kneeling together. Startled and tremblingly she listened to the words which fell from her niece's lips, and could hardly believe what she saw and heard; and then again these words she hears distinctly, "Heavenly blessings on dear Aunt Jane."

She crept silently to her room, and went to bed without ringing for Fanny, the maid, to assist her; she liked to be alone to think of what had passed, and yet she was half afraid to be so.

"Well did you ever hear such a thing, holding a prayer meeting in their room, and praying for me. I should like to know what I want of their prayers. Oh I wish it was morning, I shall not get a wink of sleep I know. Aunt Jane, what a simpleton you are to let that slip of a girl upset you. I will——"

This and a great deal more she said to herself; but on one point she was firm, and that was, that as soon as she could see her brother-in-law, she would tell him all about it, and see how he liked his place turned into a Methodist meeting house.

"Ah, I know how it would be, sending my niece to that queer school; but what does appear to me strange, is that Violet, the little saint that we expected to see, is anything but what we anticipated. She and Grace too are both as merry and as ready for a joke as anyone else. I always had a dread of religion, because of the sad and solemn life I should have to lead. Indeed, were it not for the prayer-meetings I witnessed, I should have my doubts about their religion altogether."

This lady had yet to learn that a solemn or long-face was no indication of a renewed heart within. It is only the true follower of Christ that has cause to be cheerful and happy, as in the case of our two favorites.

It is an old and true saying that "cheerfulness is catching," and this solitary maiden-lady, whom we have found so grumbling, was not proof against it. The next day the bustle of preparation was very great, and was not without a pleasant excitement. Grace and Violet were very busy, and Aunt Jane forgetting the "prayer-meeting," watched with an amused interest the

two figures flitting here and there and everywhere. The evening came, and guests began to assemble. She would not be behind-hand, but came forward to assist in receiving them with the good breeding that was natural to her, and many remarked that she looked so much better, and more cheerful than was her wont. Later on in the evening she even took part in one of the tableaux, a gipsy scene in which they had acted at school. The tall figure of Aunt Jane, her raven black eyes, and also hair (although its natural colour was changed a little), artificial aid still gave it the proper hue, and she formed the most conspicuous person in the tableaux, as she was reading the stars.

There was a large gathering of young people. Dancing and amusements of every description were resorted to. Grace introduced the new step of which we have spoken. The enjoyment was at its height, and nothing seemed inclined to mar the pleasure of the evening.

A little incident afterwards, however, occurred at the supper table, which ruffled a little the hitherto even temper of Aunt Jane. A most

elegant and sumptuous repast had been prepared for the occasion, and we know whose fair hands had had the making of most of the good things there. And some of the guests having made some remarks about the cakes and other things they were enjoying, Grace ventured to say "that she and her friend had done it all." Yes, she had no false pride about her; but her aunt, and also her mother, would rather the company believed it to be done out of the house. In vain they tried to catch her attention to make her stop. She went on enlarging upon the doings at school, and in five minutes more the company were made aware of the fact that Miss Morton, whose guests they were, could cook and bake; that she liked it, and not only liked it, but was proud of it.

When after supper she could speak alone to her sister, she relieved her mind in an outburst of rage.

"Carry," she said, "come here. I shall go straight to bed. I will not go back to be laughed at, that my niece has been acting as cook for her party. Was it not enough that she did it?

But no, she must parade it about. I have no patience with you, Carry, to have such doings in your house; your pride and self-respect must surely be gone."

So saying, Aunt Jane betook herself to bed, and we hope to sleep.

In vain did she try the next day to reproach Grace for her thoughtlessness—that young lady had truth on her side, and it conquered now.

"What!" cried Grace, "would you make me act a lie, to let them think the things were prepared by a confectioner, when we did it ourselves. And as to being ashamed, I tell you, Aunt Jane, I am proud to have learned to lead a useful life, to be a comfort not only at home, but also to my fellow-beings. I hope I shall in some measure become what the title of my book is, which they gave me at school, 'A True Woman,' and not a mere doll. I hope never again to steal the days of God as I have done."

"Steal the days of God! What do you mean?" asked her aunt.

"Look here aunt," replied Grace, "do you think God placed us here to idle away day after

day, and never do anything to benefit our fellow-creatures, or even ourselves. By so doing, as I said before, we steal His time, and shall have to give an account sooner or later for the time thus wasted."

Aunt Jane was speechless; she could not understand a word that Grace said. She had never in all her life given it a thought, and now here was a young girl, her own niece, whom she had petted as a little child only a short time before, telling her she was a thief. Well, it was not to be borne.

And when her sister, an hour later, came in the room, she had not quite recovered from the shock which Grace's words had given, and she poured out her grievances into her sister's ears.

"I suppose you will hardly believe it Carry, but Grace and her friend hold prayer-meetings in their room at night, and I mean to tell Charles of it."

"What do you mean?" asked Mrs. Morton.

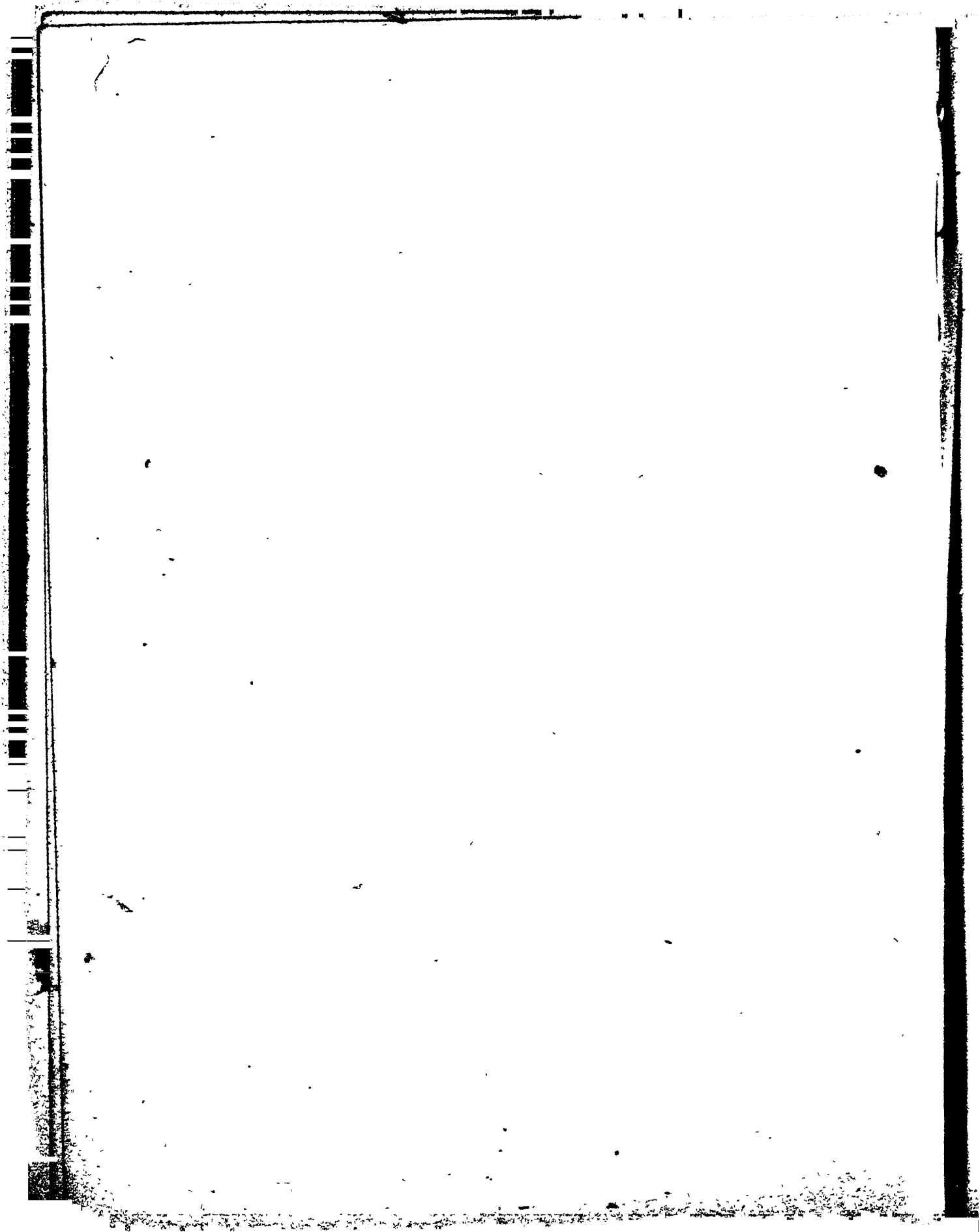
"What I say," replied she. "As I passed the other night, their door was partly open, I heard Grace raising her voice in a solemn tone, and

looking in I saw them both on their knees, and she was praying for all the world like a Methodist preacher."

Mr. Morton, who had just entered the room, heard the last part of this speech, and when he had heard the whole, it was too evident that he felt it very much. He looked out of the window for some time, and then turning round said impressively, "Thank God that strangers have done for my child what should have been the work of the parent. The best we can do Jane, is to follow her example."

A few days later he accompanied Grace and her friend part of the way back to school, and on his return home never had it seemed so lonely before. And when in his room that evening he opened his bible, which he had never done before for many a long day.







CHAPTER VII.

VIOLET'S BIRTHDAY.

MANY birthdays had been celebrated in the school, since the custom of observing them had first commenced, and the time of which we are now about to speak; the warm April sun is bringing out all nature, shrubs and plants are beginning to sprout again after their long winter sleep, and a birthday is about to be celebrated, that exceeds in importance and interest all others that have preceded it, viz., that of Miss Violet Grant, who in so short a time had won into the affections of both pupils and teachers, as to be considered the favourite or darling of the school; and now that an opportunity came she was to be feted with all honours.

Madame Giatto invited the council, and the various teachers to tea in the evening, and a

birthday cake was placed upon the table of such large dimensions that perhaps was never seen in any school before.

On the morning in question, as Violet stepped out of her room, she found the young ladies all assembled to greet her; each wished her "many happy returns of the day," and Josephine Huntley coming forward in the name of the pupils, presented her with a large album containing the photograph of each one of them, Madame Giatto, and the other teachers included. Nothing they could have given her could have been more appropriate, or could have given her greater satisfaction.

Tears of joy stood in her eyes as she received the handsome gift; and while examining it, she thought of the time when she should be separated from them, and this timely gift would enable her to call to mind the dear face of some friend of her school days. She thanked them many times, and assured them how much the remembrance of this day would ever be endeared to her.

They then had to separate for their respective

duties, and hurry to be prepared for the evening.

The invited guests arrived in due time, and all shook Violet by the hand, congratulating her warmly, and paying the usual birthday compliments. The largest room in the house had been thrown open for the occasion; and the entertainment was commenced by a small scene that had been pre-arranged.

While Violet was receiving the congratulations of her friends, a group of the elder girls came into the room, all dressed in white, with Grace Morton at their head; the latter stepping up to Violet, crowned her with a wreath of fresh violets—Grace's own especial gift to her dear friend. These delicious flowers spread their perfume all over the room. Louisa Reynolds then came forward, and recited a piece of poetry that had been got up expressly for the occasion. It was afterwards sung during the evening as their Music-master had kindly set it to a tune. The words were very appropriate to our lovely friend, and did credit alike to the head and heart of its composer. They are as follows:—

THE VIOLET.

I.


Have you observed in Spring time,
A small but welcome flower,
Which blooms in shady places,
Or in some rustic bower?
It seems to shrink from notice,
Beneath its leafy shields;
But you are sure to find it
By the sweet smell it yields.

II.

The Violet! ah, you know it,
The pretty modest thing;
In town as well as country,
Fair herald of the spring.
Tied up in tiny bunches,
The sick one's room it cheers,
And by its lovely perfume,
Itself to all endears.

III.

A shy sweet little creature,
Guileless in all her ways;
Our blue eyed Violet dreams not,
How oft she winneth praise.
When strangers gaze upon her,
Close to our side she clings;
Unconscious of the fragrance,
Which all around she flings.



IV.

By kind and loving actions,
By winning words and smiles,
She fills our school with gladness,
And every care beguiles.
Thus meek and unassuming,
All thoughts of self put low ;
Our humble little Violet
Does like the Violet grow.

These beautiful lines, so touchingly recited, was felt by all. It was a living tableau that will remain in the memories of those who witnessed it for many a day. Many of the visitor's eyes were dimmed with tears, but the joy of Violet was unbounded.

"Oh you dear, dear girls!" she cried, as she kissed them all round, regardless of lookers on, "Oh these beautiful flowers! what must they not have cost you, Grace, because they are so rare in Canada. I do love to smell them, and have often wished to go to England, where I am told they grow wild so early as in March; but may I take them off now, and put them into water to preserve them as long as I can. They would not give her permission just then, but

lovingly surrounded her, and told her she must wait till her song had been sung. Maude Melville then took her seat at the piano, and Violet's song was received and encored with great *eclat*. The rest of the evening was spent very happily, and will long be remembered by those who participated in its enjoyment.

Spring time! *Spring* time! With what longing do we all look forward to this season of the year, and what joy does it bring to young and old alike.

The sufferer on a lonely sick bed looks forward and sighs, and hopes, and often we hear him exclaim, "Ah I shall be better when spring comes," though perhaps it may be the last that will ever be spent by him on earth. But if only a few days are given him, before he leaves this world, to have his window thrown open, where he can see the trees just bursting into foliage, and hear the twittering of birds building their nests, and singing their joyful songs of praise to their Creator; and the sweet spring flowers shedding their perfume, which the balmy air carries to the sufferer's bedside, making the last

days of his sojourn here very happy; knowing that soon he shall be where an everlasting spring for the faithful awaits him, and he is quite ready to go when the summons comes.

But different hopes and aspirations await the young people to whom this book is especially dedicated. They are now candidates for honours. Each one is trying to keep as high as possible in her class, to obtain the prize awarded at the end of the half-year. Many now regret the time they have lost at the beginning of the term, as they could not redeem their misspent hours; and felt that they must now, with as good grace as possible, resign all claims for distinction. Many there were who were about to leave with high honours, which they richly deserved, and were studying hard for their examination; but now that spring and warm weather was setting in, their studies were not allowed to interfere with out-door recreation. Once a week a long walk was taken into some woods or avenue in the neighbourhood. Sometimes a whole day was given to it, and they took a lunch under the shade of trees. Several of the teachers accom-

panied them, and many a lesson they learned there, with birds looking on, and I dare say in their own mute language, wondering who their fair intruders were; but however rewarded them with their sweetest songs. They often took their books to study their lessons for the following day, or their teachers gave them a lesson in botany, which of course can be learnt best with all the plants around them, than indoors. This is a favourite study of the Germans, and is always done under the blue canopy of Heaven.

And after one of these delightful days, they would return home decorated with wreaths of wild flowers and green leaves; meeting on their way the sturdy labourer, who returning from *his* day's labour, would often turn to look at this fantastic and merry group, while from his lips would be heard these words, "Those pretty lasses, God bless 'em!"

To study in hot weather is hard work; nevertheless, no time can be lost now. Each one is busy from morning till night; but they have this consolation, in a few days it will be all over, and

they would have two months' holidays to recruit themselves. The examinations were drawing to a close; but there was the last and final one before they departed for their homes. On this day visitors were expected, and the friends of all the children who choose to come were made welcome, The merits of each were now made known, and the prizes awarded.

The large class-rooms were all thrown open, and drawings of every description, and specimens of penmanship, both in German and English, were exhibited; and all kinds of fancy needle work too were shown.

The young ladies themselves dressed in simple white, relieved by a spray of lilac or honeysuckle, were all placed upon a platform to show their proficiency in music and singing. And this department particularly showed much for the careful training they had received, and many of their performances were quite equal to that of professional players or singers.

Pieces in the German and French languages were also recited; and could the company have understood it, they would have known that no

interpreter would be needed should their daughters visit these countries.

Our friends, Maude and Minnie, stood almost the highest in the school. They received valuable prizes, accompanied with great commendations from their superiors. It was their last term, as it was with some others, and they were leaving school with high honours. And we trust the homes they are returning to will be brightened by their presence, and their amiable dispositions spread a halo around their home circle.

Examination being over, the packing begins, for to-morrow they leave for home.

Home for the holidays! "Whose heart does not leap within them at the words?" No matter how happy they may have been at school, there is a mighty charm in that word "home."

Grace Morton finding that Maude and Minnie were not returning to school, had invited them to go home with her, so as to secure them as much as possible before a longer separation took place. Violet hoped to return for another year, as did also Grace, so that they would see each

other after the holidays. A true and lasting friendship had been cemented between these four interesting girls, which neither time nor distance could ever sever. And it was natural they should wish to spend a few more happy days together, before they say "farewell" for an indefinite period. What their future might be was now hidden from them. But we have no fear, should Dame Fortune frown upon them, for they possess that which never changes—a steadfast hope in an Almighty Providence.

Let us follow them on their homeward path, let us take part in all their pleasures, and hide the dark future which is about to fall—at least upon two of them. Could they have divined what a to-morrow would shortly bring forth, they would not have been so merry on their journey.

Mr. and Mrs. Morton came to meet them, and even Aunt Jane came forward as soon as she heard the carriage wheels which conveyed the fair travellers, although in her own mind she wondered whether they possessed the same queer notions that she so disliked. However,

here they are. The niece she had loved so well was soon in her arms, and she kindly welcomed her two friends.





CHAPTER VIII.

GRACE MORTON'S HOME.

THE beautiful residence of Mr. Morton was surrounded by large grounds and gardens, and at this time of year looked its best. Large sums of money were spent upon it yearly to have all the newest production of shrubs and flowers which Canada produced. And to Violet and her friends, who had just come from a large town, it looked like a paradise just now.

The fruit was all ripe; gooseberries, raspberries, and cherries were in abundance, and it was delightful occupation for each to gather for themselves. Every morning one or the other would pick whatever was required for breakfast, and often Grace would lay it under one of the large shade trees near the house. And what a

breakfast she would prepare, assisted by her friends. Hot rolls every morning were quite the rule. Coffee made in the German style, plenty of sweet cream and fresh fruit, with cold meat and new laid eggs, furnished an admirable bill of fare. Mr. Morton enjoyed this meal immensely, enlivened as it was by pleasant companionship; and it was with a sigh of regret that he thought of the time when they would leave him for school. He should have to take his tea or coffee badly made alone, with meat fried to a cinder, eggs as hard as bullets, and should there be anything else, it would be quite as tasteless. But Grace had thought of this, and determined to teach Molly the cook (who was a good tempered Irish girl) many things for her father's comfort, and had exacted a promise from her to make hot rolls for his breakfast as long as he enjoyed them. She showed her how to make them, and also tea and coffee, and other things that might be required, So the prospect for Mr. Morton was a little brighter.

Aunt Jane was not slow to perceive that their young guests visited the kitchen daily in com-

pany with Grace, and chatted with Molly some time. She became very wroth at this, and relieved her mind by speaking to Mrs. Morton.

“Why don’t you stop those girls going into the kitchen, Carry. You will find, before you are aware of it, that Molly will give you warning to leave. No servant likes her kitchen invaded by a parcel of young girls. It is not my place, or I would go myself and see what they are doing and saying; but you, as mistress of the house, can surely forbid it.”

“I think,” replied Mrs. Morton, “they are ironing some of their dresses, for Kate told me they insisted upon doing it for themselves, although she offered to do it for them. You should hear what Kate and Fanny say about them: ‘O they are such nice young ladies, and so kind and thoughtful to give as little trouble as possible.’ They think servants may get tired as well as other people, and I am afraid Kate is right when she says twenty of them would not give so much trouble as two sometimes. I think she means you and me. They do so much for

themselves, of course it saves the servants very much."

"And do you mean to say, you think they are in the right?" cried Miss Jane.

"No! of course not," replied Mrs. Morton, "I think people who pay servants are entitled to their services; but still it does not strike me that Grace and her companions are less ladies because they can wait upon themselves."

"Well, they cannot be ironing every day, and you had better speak to Molly at once, and see what she thinks about it. Change of servants is a serious matter to us, because you know that we being ladies cannot be servants too."

You see that lady picked the stones, and Mrs. Morton was weak minded enough to throw them. And no house should have what is termed a go-between, for the consequences are apt to be serious.

Mrs. Morton went into the kitchen when the coast was clear, and she knew that the young ladies were out for a drive.

Molly was not a little surprised at seeing her mistress in the kitchen at this hour of the day;

it was so very unusual, and began to think, "Surely something must be up to bring her now."

"Molly," began Mrs. Morton meekly, "I do not wish you to think that I am in favour of my daughter and her new friends coming into the kitchen to hinder you from your work, so when they come again, just tell them that you would feel obliged by their not remaining."

"Law, Missis, how you do talk!" replied Molly, "Why they are as welcome to me as a new moon, and as to hindering me, it is just the other way I am thinking, for they often give me a hand when I am busy. I feel like a new creature since Miss Grace—God bless her!—is at home with her friends, who are real ladies, if ever there were any."

"Why, what do you find so wonderful about them?" asked Mrs. Morton.

"Oh, they can speak to a servant in a kindly way, and not as some whom I could mention. They do not think servants have no feelings, or can ever get tired; but they try in every way to make their work light. I could lay down my life

for them, and if that is the way that school teaches young ladies, the name of that school should be engraven in letters of gold ! and it is a pity," added Molly, forgetting in whose presence she was, "they do not take old maids, and they might learn to be a little less overbearing than they are now, and who think servants so much dirt."

Mrs. Morton not liking this allusion to her sister, and seeing that she should get the worst of it, endeavoured to change the subject ; but Molly had not done.

"I suppose you do not know how much Miss Grace has taught me since she came home. I always thought myself a first-rate cook, but she has taken the conceit out of me. Now, you know you sent for me yesterday, when you and master enjoyed that piece of meat so much for dinner, and master praised me for it, and you asking me why I never cooked anything like it before ; I felt just as mean to get praise which should have been for Miss Grace, but she shook her head at me not to tell you about it ; but now I will tell you, and how it is cooked, and may be you will

help me to remember the way of cooking it. When the butcher brought the meat it felt as if it had just been cut from the ox, it was so warm. Miss Grace was in the kitchen and saw it."

"Molly," she said, "this is not a nice piece for roasting; besides I think papa would like to have it done in a different way."

"You mean to boil it," says I.

"No, no, not to boil it," says she. "I will show you how, and then you can do it sometimes for a change from the everlasting boil or roast."

"Of course I'll be only too glad Miss," says I, "but what is a body to do if they know no other way."

"So she goes into the garden, and brings in some new carrots, onions, parsley, and savory; and she takes the meat and puts it into a pan in the oven till it roasted a little on both sides; then she takes a bit of dripping, puts it into this large pan, cut up the onions and browns them; then she takes a large spoonful of flower, and put it into the pan, and then browns that also; then she puts hot water to it, then the carrots, parsley, and savory, pepper and salt;

and then the meat, which must be covered with water, and covered down tight, and lets it cook at the back of the stove for three hours; then out comes that nice meat you and master praised me for, and which I did not deserve; and look at this," said she, handing Mrs. Morton a small book, "this is just full of all kinds of recipes, which these dear young ladies have written out for me, so you need no longer wonder that they are more than welcome in Molly's kitchen. Why it is as if the sun shines in every part of it when they come in. I——

"Carry! Carry!" cried Aunt Jane on the top of the stairs, "do come out of that hot kitchen; you will be roasted alive in this hot weather."

"Well," muttered Molly to herself, not pleased at the interruption, "if a fiery volcano would take you it would be a good riddance; and I would wear mourning for you if it cost me the last dollar."

"Well Carry, why did you stay so long in that hot kitchen? Why it is like an oven here, so what must it be down there where there is a fire. Just look in the glass and see how heated you

are, and go and bathe your face; but first tell me what Molly said. I suppose she was thankful for your telling her."

"No indeed," replied Mrs. Morton; "Molly likes to have them there, they have taught her many new ways about cooking. And I do think, Jane, we had better let Grace have her own way in this matter. By interfering we only make it worse."

"But you did not tell me what Molly did say?"

"Oh, I think you would not care to hear it, but she evidently thinks that they know how to treat servants better than we do."

"Yes, it is just what I might have expected, and the sooner I go home to England the better. I shall die of vexation if I remain here. You have not a spark of spirit left to be hood-winked by four girls, who pretend to know better than their seniors. Perhaps they will teach you to dress next."

"There is many a true word spoken in jest," and Aunt Jane had yet to learn how very near the truth her last remark had been, for Mrs.

Morton's tastes and opinions were certainly undergoing a change. The young people's extreme simplicity and good taste in dress had struck her very much. They generally wore some pretty light colour, or more frequently pure white, relieved only by a spray of real flower in the brooch or hair. Even visitors had passed certain commendations. And Mrs. Morton had laid aside much of that costly jewellery which she had for years worn as the necessary appendage of a lady.

It was with deep regret that Mrs. Morton perceived how very irritable her sister had of late become. Often had she threatened to return to her native country; and now, under the changed aspects of affairs, it seemed as if it would be better for her to take that step. Now that dear Grace had grown up in an atmosphere of usefulness, and her amiable disposition was diffusing an influence everywhere alike, either in kitchen or drawing-room, this new state of things jarred terribly on the nerves of this aristocratic maiden lady. Mrs. Morton's better nature had been roused by the lovely example of these young

people. And how could Mrs. M. long withstand the influence of her devoted husband and daughter. Had she not seen him, night after night in his bed-room, reading the Sacred Scriptures, and kneeling to prayer afterwards. She too had sometimes read a chapter and felt happier, and should she change too like the others. Her sister would only laugh at her, and what could she do. She was sorely perplexed, and in this mood we must leave her.

Grace and her friends found some new pleasure every day, so that the month had nearly slipped away before they were aware of it, and Violet had to leave for home in a few days; but the post that morning brought them intelligence that nearly drove them frantic with delight. It was a letter to say that four more of their companions would pay them a visit for two days *en passant*, and would be there that night.

Grace came dancing into the room, letter in hand, to tell the joyful news, where her aunt and mother were sitting; and again Aunt Jane felt her dignity a little touched.

"Well, I never!" said she. "Do you take

your father's house for a boarding-house to bring all the school girls in Canada into it? If I were your mother, which thank goodness I am not, I would not allow it."

"O, aunt dear, why are you so cross this morning. I am sure my friends have never given you any trouble. And as this is mamma and papa's home, it is they who will have to forbid it; and I am sure they are much too kind for that."

"Oh, bring the whole school, by all means; I am nobody here. The sooner I am gone the better for me."

"I should dearly like to have them all here, and I hope they will in turns pay us a visit. There is not one amongst them whom you would not like, if you only knew them," answered Grace.

"Which I never shall. I have no fancy to become intimate with school girls."

Mrs. Morton, however, received the intelligence very differently; she fully entered into Grace's pleasure. Orders were given at once to have rooms prepared for the new comers, who

arrived that evening. And the young people went to the station to meet them, Mr. and Mrs. Morton accompanying them. And although they had only been separated a few weeks, their joy at meeting was unbounded.

It would be as well to mention the names of these visitors, which I have not done. Miss Susie Heasel, Cora Dunbar, Josephine Huntley and Louisa Marling, are the additional guests in Mr. Morton's house. The first of these young ladies, we may remember, was a very plain spoken girl, and full of mischief. And Grace knowing her aunt's prejudices, was afraid that she and Miss Heasel would not get along together very well.

An introduction having been gone through with due formalities, it was evident that these two understood each other. Aunt Jane bowed very stiffly, and our young friend did the same.

Shortly after, when Susie found herself alone with Grace, she abruptly asked, "How many aunts have you, dear?"

"I have only two," said she. "One settled in London, England, and the other here."

"Would you not be glad if she were in London, too?" asked Susie. "Oh, did not she look down upon poor me when you introduced me. But what a contrast she forms to your dear mamma, dark like a gipsy, and proud—proud as Lucifer, I should think."

"Now Susie, that is too bad," answered Grace, "to find fault with aunty the first time you see her. You must not play her any pranks, remember, for my sake."

But our mischievous Susie did not answer; she knew herself too well. If an opportunity presented itself, it is to be feared she could not spare even Grace's aunt.

Mr. and Mrs. Morton were delighted with them all, and spared no pains for their entertainment; and when they sat down for their first meal, it was worth while to go some distance to have had a look at them. All were in the highest possible spirits, and forming a picture of health and happiness. Susie had placed herself next to Aunt Jane, who was sitting in great state. Maude and Minnie were opposite, and hardly able to keep from laughing at the humorous anec-

dotes she would relate of their school-day life. Mr. Morton was as happy as a king. Mrs. M. was a little fidgetty on her sister's account, lest she should not quite agree with the merriment that Susie would keep up till the meal was fairly ended.

In the evening two gentlemen called, no doubt actuated by the knowledge of so many young ladies being in the case. Music and singing were the order of the evening, and Susie having a very fine voice was asked to sing alone.

"Can you sing?" asked Aunt Jane, surprised.

"Oh yes, I can sing 'Yankee Doodle,' and the 'Star Spangled Banner;' shall I sing them to you?" she asked, her eyes full of fun.

"No thank you," replied Aunt Jane, "I have no taste for such things." And she arose, and would have left the room, had not Grace whispered, "Don't go, dear aunty, she is only in fun; she has one of the finest voices in the school, and you will like to hear her."

Susie then went to the piano, and after playing an interlude, she sang with great pathos "There's a Silver Lining to every Cloud." Song

after song was repeated after this, and then as if to suit the words to the occasion, she finished up with "What changes will take place ere we may meet again." This touched the young friends deeply, who knew that they were soon to part.

"Oh yes, what will take place ere we may meet again," they exclaimed. Even Aunt Jane was affected, and admitted that Miss Susie had a fine voice, "that even an English lady might envy, let alone a Yankee," she added in a low tone, but Miss Susie had sharp little ears, and resented it.

"I am proud to be a free-born American," said she, "and as we are at peace with England, which I hope may continue for ever, will you shake hands with me, Miss, before I go from here. I should like to leave a good impression behind me." So saying she held out her little hand, which this lady consented to take, though hesitatingly.

Only two days was the time they had intended to stay, but Mr. Morton would not allow them to leave under a week. A large garden party was

proposed, and all the eligible young people in the neighbourhood, of both sexes, were invited. The news had spread far and wide, that seven young ladies from this celebrated school in Canada were staying at Mr. Morton's, all of them handsome and accomplished girls. Many pressed forward, hoping to be included in the invitation; and the gentlemen, we will excuse them if they did spend an additional hour at their toilet, in order to look their best on this trying occasion.

When Aunt Jane heard of it, it met with her disapproval, as everything seemed to do now. She could hardly find words enough to express her indignation.

"Well, I do think Charles is coming to his dotage. Is it not enough that he spoils our summer trip by allowing Grace to have all those girls here, but he must give a large party in hot weather. I wonder what your servants say to that, Mrs. Morton?"

"Oh, they are only too happy to do all they can for them in any way that will contribute to their pleasure. I heard Grace tell Molly and Kate about it, and that they would like to come

down to-morrow to make preparations, and would it be convenient to Molly to have them. And Molly said, 'She would only be too proud to have her young mistress and her friends come down whenever they pleased to come into her kitchen,' " said Mrs. Morton.

"So Grace asked your cook to allow her to come. Well, that exceeds anything I ever heard before."

"What would you have her do, Jane? First you grumble at what the servants will say, and then her kindness to them displeases you. I really do not know what one can do not to vex you."

Grace coming into the room at that moment prevented the reply that Aunt Jane might have made, and perhaps it was better unsaid.

How many there are who, when some spiteful feeling gets the better of them, will allow themselves to give way to bitter expressions of friends who are not present; and whom, should they appear suddenly, would be too cowardly to substantiate their charges. It is a true saying that an evil tongue has done as much mischief as

the sword. And as often one spark has laid a city in ashes, so have evil tongues caused many to suffer innocently. The practice of idle talking is much to be deplored amongst the young, and should be strictly guarded against. Surely, in this beautiful world, there is ample scope for conversation without condescending to speak ill of a neighbour.

But now let us return to our young friends to see what they are about just now. They are sitting on the green carpet under a large tree, and holding a council as to what shall constitute the bill of fare they are to prepare for the party two days hence. Grace referred to her mamma as a dutiful daughter should do; but the answer was, "have what you please my dear, you know better a great deal than I do what will be required." And this was literally true.

So Grace held council with her friends, and each offered her opinion, and what they will undertake to make, and all is carefully written down to make no mistakes. Miss Jane is sitting at a window in the distance, scanning this beautiful group, and unconsciously, in spite of her

pride and wounded feelings, wishing she were one of them; but she cannot bend so far as to go and sit by them, and join their conversation. No, no, Aunt Jane! stay where you are; do not cast a cloud over the bright sunshine there, and spoil the merriment in which they now indulge.

So taking Nip on her lap, he and his mistress fell fast asleep, and the latter dreamt that she was still a young and beautiful girl, and was going with Susie Heasel to a boarding school, where the mysteries of the kitchen were taught, and where Susie had to overlook, and see that her task was done well; and when she awoke she was thankful to find herself in her own room.

In the meantime our young friends had descended into the kitchen, and were as busy as bees. Molly and Kate were delighted with the condescending and nice spoken young ladies, and were ready to wait upon them hand and foot.

Poor Fanny had been ordered up stairs to do some sewing for Miss Jane, and was a little envious that she could not join them below. She had however to submit, but hearing sounds

soon afterwards which startled her, she threw down her work, and darted out of the room, occasioning fresh ground of complaint from her mistress, who would but exclaim upon the impertinence of servants leaving the room without permission.

What was it that had attracted Fanny so? On reaching the kitchen she found Miss Heasel singing to Molly one of her favourite national Irish songs, "I am not myself at all Molly dear." The name was appropriate, and Susie sung it so sweetly that it brought the tears into Molly's eyes. "An shure, didn't I say the first night you came, and sang so prettily up stairs, didn't I say that I was shure you could sing Irish. You would not be a good singer if you could not," said Molly.

Thus did these amiable girls, by their little acts of condescension and good nature endear themselves to their dependents, and all with whom they came in contact. There was only one in this stately mansion who stood aloof, and would not admit their gentle influence, and that was Aunt Jane. There was a wide barrier

between mistress and maid, to which an early education had accustomed her, and any encroachment or familiarity greatly offended her, and it was not to be overlooked. The incident of to-day has quite upset her, and she can hardly recover herself sufficiently to enable her to come into the drawing-room, and when she does come she encases herself behind a book, and is proudly reserved for the rest of the evening.

Our young friends were always the same. "To please, and to be pleased," was their constant effort, and they succeeded well.

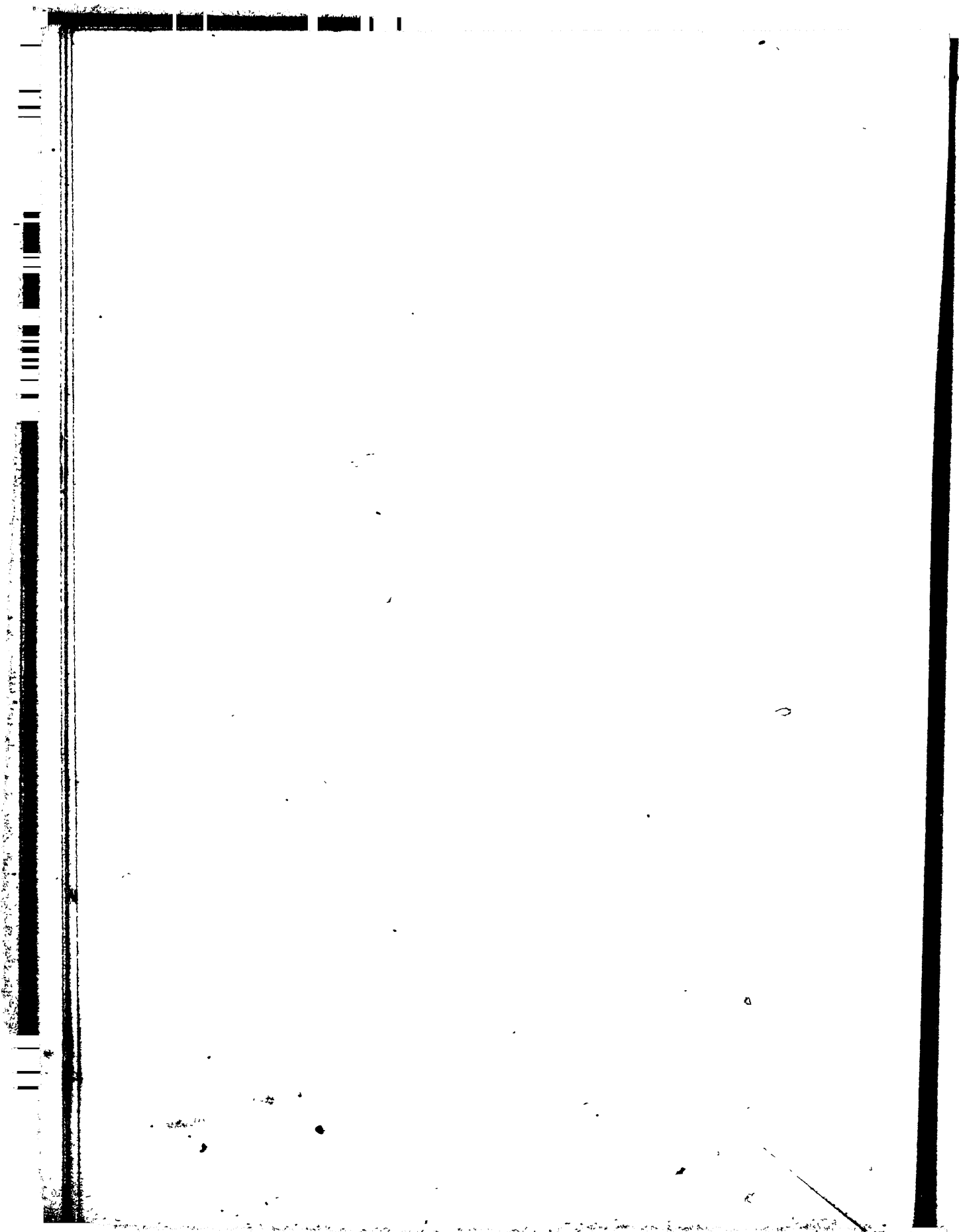
This evening they spent in writing out a play in which they intended to act at a coming party.

The auspicious day at length arrives, and Mr. Morton's lovely grounds are filling with guests, who represent the best society for miles round. Grace and her companions are doing the honours, and receiving them all with a kindly welcome.

A most elegant supper-table was laid out upon the lawn, upon which was every delicacy that could be thought of, both in season, and out of season. The dishes prepared by our young

friends formed a conspicuous part, and when afterwards the guests were seated to partake of these good things, the gentlemen caused a great deal of merriment. Whatever they partook of, they wanted to know whose fair hands had made it, and how it was done, etc. The evening sped on very delightfully, and when it became too dark for the grounds, they were ushered into the drawing rooms that had all been thrown open, and were brilliantly lighted, and decorated with flowers and hot-house plants of every description, the whole presenting a scene of enchantment.

This affair that had been got up entirely out of compliment to our young friends, proved a brilliant success, and will long be remembered by all who partook in the festivities. They themselves proved a centre of attraction by their simplicity and lady-like deportment, and have left a pleasing impression upon the minds of their friends that will not easily be effaced; and as we cannot enter into the minutiae of all that occurred on this delightful occasion, we bid farewell for the present to our friends who are still in the midst of this brilliant scene.





CHAPTER IX.

VIOLET'S HOME.

REPARATIONS for departure have been made by the four new guests, and Violet accompanies them. They have just exchanged farewells with Mrs. Morton and Aunt Jane, thanking the former for her kind hospitality; and Maude and Minnie, who are still to remain as guests, accompany them to the station with Grace and Mrs. Morton. They then separate for the different routes to their homes, where they have long been expected.

When Violet reached New York, her aunt and uncle were there to meet her and welcome her back. Her delight at meeting them after so long a separation was very great, and they were unmistakably glad to see their niece, but Violet, so quick to detect, fancied there was a sadness in their tone and manner which they could not

hide, but she forebore to ask questions, only waiting to be assured that her dear mother was well; having satisfied herself upon this point, she no longer felt any fear. Her trust was in Him who "doeth all things well" for His children who believe in Him.

"Oh how you have grown!" said her aunt, "and you look so well. Why you are not the same girl who went away."

"Quite the same, dear aunty, only much stronger, for which I am indeed most thankful."

"Your mother will be surprised to see such rosy cheeks, instead of the pale ones you took away with you," said her uncle; "and you have grown a head taller."

"But you know, uncle, I am a year older; and now nearly eighteen years of age."

"Yes, I know you are seventeen years and five months, or thereabout," said he laughing; "unless Canadian months are shorter than our own. And so you had a great birthday celebration? I should very much like to have witnessed the whole, especially the crowning you like a little queen."

"I have the violets now, dear uncle," said she, "pressed and dried, for a keepsake. Oh it was the most delightful birthday I ever spent. They were all so kind to me, and when I went to bed that night, I cried like a baby, and could not help it."

"I can well understand your feelings," replied her aunt, "but if you had not been what we know you are, they would not have done it."

"Perhaps not aunty; but there are others in the school quite as much deserving of kindness as myself; but I think the name had something to do with it, and they composed a nice little song, called "Violet's song," drawing comparisons between my name and the flower."

On reaching home, Mrs. Grant was up and dressed to receive her daughter; and her cousins were all with her.

On the carriage stopping she hastened to her mother's room, and in a moment more was folded in her arms. Both were overcome; but Violet spoke first.

"Oh mother, darling mother; how glad I am to see you again, you do look perfectly beautiful.

Why, how did it happen, you are looking so well?"

"I am much better," replied Mrs. Grant, "than when you left; but how you have grown, my child, and you look so healthy."

"So I am mamma," replied Violet, throwing her hat on one chair, and her jacket on another, and then kissed all her cousins repeatedly. "Oh! how glad I am to be home with you once more," she cried?

"Well, we thought you did not care about us any longer, as you went to pay a visit first to Mr. Morton's before coming home," said her cousin Clara.

"Oh Clara! you don't mean that. I could not refuse the invitation that Mrs. Morton gave me at Easter; especially as Maude and Minnie were going. We had a most delightful time; and four more from the school joined us afterwards, and stayed a week, and we all started for home together. We had to separate for our different homes, but Susie Heasel came with me as far as Buffalo. She is the merriest and best hearted girl you ever met with, and she sings beautifully,

She quite offended Grace Morton's aunt, who is a very proud lady, by singing an Irish song to the cook (in the kitchen), who is an Irish girl; and it pleased her very much to hear one of her own national songs."

"Susie would just as soon show a kindness to a servant girl as she would to any one else; and I think she is right."

"I should very much like to see your young friends, especially Grace Morton; she must be a very nice girl by your description of her, and to judge by her photograph, is very handsome too."

"Oh yes she is the best and dearest girl, and very handsome; a beautiful fair complexion, like marble, and blue, sparkling eyes; and her father is such a nice gentleman, and treated me as if I had been his own daughter. Mrs. Morton is very like her daughter in outward beauty, but not in disposition, I think Grace has her mother's beauty, and her father's amiability."

"And what about the aunt you were speaking of; is she Mr. or Mrs. Morton's sister?"

“Oh, Mrs. Morton’s; but very unlike her in every respect. She is very tall, and has coal black eyes, and hair dark as the raven’s wing. She must have been very handsome when young, but she is proud, and possesses the English hauteur; she does not like our homely notions, and found great fault with us.”

“It is a wonder she never married; how old is she?” asked her mother.

“Grace told me about fifty, but she is very touchy upon this point, and does not like her age alluded to. I do not think she has quite given up the thought of being married yet; but I pity the gentleman whoever he may be.”

Just at this point the old nurse came in, who had been on an errand, and she was nearly beside herself with joy at finding her young mistress there and looking so well.

“Oh, my darling Miss Violet,” exclaimed she, “how mistress and me have longed to see you; we thought the time never would come.”

“Don’t call me Miss, Nursy; to you I am Violet. I shall think you do not love me if you call me Miss.”

"But you are a tall young lady now; it is not proper to call you the same as when you were a little wee girl," said nurse.

"Never mind that; to you I am Violet, and nothing more. But tell me how you have managed to make mamma look so well."

"Well, you see, after you left it was rather lonesome like for mistress, with only me about her most of the time; she missed your reading to her, and often regretted that I could not do it. Bless you! I could not make much head on it when I was young, but now, I am thankful, I can read my bible, and I asked her sometimes should I read her a chapter, but she did not care for it. I could have done it well, as I know many chapters off by heart, but as for stories I cannot do it; so she got up and sat at the window by the hour, and then your uncle and aunt first took her out for a drive every day, and then by and by she took a little walk with me, and you see she became stronger every day, till she is now a great deal stronger than me; and it is a good thing my dear, as I am afraid there is some trouble on your uncle's mind, and I

only waited till you came home to speak to you about it."

"Oh, nurse, tell me what you know. I saw that uncle and aunt looked sad. Do you think uncle is becoming poor?"

"I do not think it, but I know it is so. I told you once before, if you remember, long ago; it has been coming on, and now I do believe your poor uncle is on the verge of *ruin*. Your mother, poor thing, who never understood anything about money, nor ever asked where it came from, knows nothing about it, and so I wanted to see you so badly, to know what we could do for her for the future. I have a few hundreds laid up; your uncle has always been very good to me, and I have nobody but her and you, and if it can give her some of the comforts to which she has been used, why there it is, and I will give you the bank book to draw it."

Violet's eyes were filled with tears at the kind creature's words. "Oh, you dear good nurse, is it so bad as that, and do my cousins know of it, and how did you find it out?" asked Violet.

"I heard it first about six months ago. I was

not listening, but I was in that little sitting room next the library, cleaning the windows, and your uncle, talking to your aunt, asked her if she was prepared to meet poverty; and she, noble lady that she is, said "Yes;" and then she begged of your uncle not to say a word to your mother about it, to grieve her; and then soon after she discharged two of the servants, and I can see that she saves wherever she can; but my dear, this is only a drop in the bucket, and it will not be long before the crash comes."

This was sad news to Violet, on the first evening of her arrival, and she would have flown to her uncle and tried to comfort him, had not nurse begged of her not to do so.

"They will be sure to tell you dear. Have you not always been a comfort to your uncle? and he might think me meddlesome to tell you first, but I could not keep it from you, and when he does tell you, you can say to him that what I have saved up is for your mother and you, and that may make him feel a little easier in his mind."

Violet had not many days to wait. He came

home on one occasion, and taking her aunt into a room, they remained closeted there together for some time, and when he joined them at the dinner-hour, his look of deep dejection so distressed Violet, that she could hardly eat a mouthful; and that night when all were in bed and asleep, she heard him pacing up and down his room for some time. At last she could bear it no longer, and going down stairs she knocked timidly at the door. He opened it, and when he saw who was the intruder, a ray of pleasure spread over his care-worn face.

"Violet, my child," he said, "I thought you were in bed and asleep," and drawing her into the room, he placed her in a seat.

"How could I sleep, dearest uncle, knowing you were up and in trouble; will you tell me all. I am young and strong, and can bear to hear the worst."

"I will gladly do so my dear child, and would have told you long ago, only I could not bear to cast a gloom over your path directly you came home; but I know by your wistful glances, that you have expected to be told what is only too

true ; namely, that your uncle, for many years one of the richest men in New York, is now a poor man, and will have to give up all he has to his creditors, to save his name and honour. It has been coming on a long time, and to-day the failing of one of our largest banks has brought about that which I have in vain tried to tide over. This house and all in it must go to the hammer, and my noble hearted wife and children and sister will have no home."

For a few minutes the strong man buried his face in his hands, in excess of anguish ; but his niece, laying her hands so gently upon him, soothed him with kind and encouraging words, till at last he again looked up, and felt himself no longer poor. Why should he despair ? He had not brought this about wilfully ; he would pay every cent he owed, if his creditors would only give him time ; and for the first time he looked the dark future boldly in the face, and something within him seemed to say, "rise and be doing, if you would be the victor."

They sat there for some time laying plans for the future of Violet and her mother. She told

her uncle what nurse had said, and found that she had fourteen hundred dollars in one of the banks—the hard earnings of a faithful servant's lifetime.

Violet saw at once that she could not think of returning to school, though her uncle advised her doing so for six months longer; but she said, "No, dear uncle; it would not be right for you to pay money for me which should go to your creditors; besides, not to flatter myself, I am quite competent to earn a livelihood by my own exertions; thanks to you, dear uncle, my education has never been neglected, and what I learned at home was so thoroughly carried out at school, and I know that I excelled others in the progress I made, that I feel a confidence in being able to support myself, and help my mother a little, and nurse I suppose must remain with her."

"Yes, dear; but as to your doing something, I cannot see what you can do, so young as you are."

"Why, I could be a clerk, in the first place, for I understand book-keeping well, both in

single and double entry; but I would rather teach, and I do not think I shall find it difficult to procure a situation; so make your mind at ease about me. I hope the time may come when I shall be able to repay you in some measure for all your kindness to us, my dear good uncle; but now let us go to bed, and may He who is our best comforter support and strengthen you in this hard trial." So saying, she led the way up stairs, where we hope that sleep will enable them, for a short season at least, to forget the trials of the coming day.

Violet's first step was to write to Grace and tell her all, little thinking—nor did Grace know at the time—that the same bank which had brought the sad crisis to Violet's uncle, had also swept away a large amount of Mr. Morton's fortune, and it would not be long before this unwelcome intelligence would reach them.

The same post which conveyed a letter to Grace, had also one to Madame Giatto, asking her help and advice, and how she had better proceed in obtaining the situation she so much desired. This being done, a little patience was

required in waiting for the answers, but there was so much to do and to arrange, and in which Violet took so prominent a part, that there was no time for unwelcome thoughts.

When Mrs. Grant heard of her brother's failure, she could not credit it; she had looked upon his wealth as a mine inexhaustible; for years she had enjoyed the comforts and elegancies of life, and now she must relinquish them all. Poor woman, she was nearly broken-hearted. Those who had the first claim, her brother's wife and children, were never thought of; no, in her selfishness even Violet was forgotten. What business had her brother to become poor? Where were they going if they had to leave this handsome house? This, and many other questions, she put constantly to her child, who tried in vain to reconcile her to the change. Poor Violet found her mother's complainings a greater trial than all the rest put together. She dared not tell her of the proposed situation for herself, and waited anxiously for the answer from Canada; and when it did come, O how cheering! and again was she thankful that her uncle had ever sent her to

the school to which she felt that she owed so much.

Madame Giatto wrote, "Nothing could have been more fortunate than your wanting a situation just now; only a few days before receiving your letter, a lady called upon me to enquire if we had amongst our pupils one willing to take a post. She wanted a governess and companion for her daughter—a lovely, though delicate little girl of eight years of age. She is the only remaining child out of six, and on this account is of course an object of the greatest solicitude to her parents. The lady, Mrs. Hammond, is in delicate health, and cannot stand our rigorous climate, so they propose going to the south of France for the winter, taking you with them, should you accept the post. The duties are light and the salary good. They will pay you seventy-five pounds per annum, and you will have ample time left you for self-improvement, which I know you will like. Mr. Hammond will be in New York in a few days, and will call upon you, and tell you all particulars, and I hope you will be satisfied with the arrangements to go

abroad with this nice family, for I think nothing could have been more suitable for you. Be assured of my sincere sympathy with your uncle in his misfortunes, and I hope he will be enabled to bear it like a Christian; and as it has not come upon him through any fault of his own, he need not fear the world's opinion."

"I am sorry not to have you back, but I hope to see you on your return from Europe. Only three weeks more and our school will re-open. Grace Morton will be here, and I am afraid will feel a little desolate at finding her room occupied by strangers. She will be prepared to find two old familiar friends away, but *you* we all expected, and I am afraid it will be a terrible disappointment to her." This was part of Madame Giatto's letter, and the prospect it contained of so desirable a situation only showed how opportune an Almighty Providence is when his help is needed. Nothing could have been more favourable, and to go abroad had been one of her fondest dreams. But how is she to break the intelligence to her mother? Never mind, she would wait a little before doing so.

She went straight to her uncle and aunt, who were much pleased with the prospect for Violet, and promised that when they had seen Mr. Hammond, and were assured for themselves that he would take every care of her, they would then see that her mother put no obstacles in her way.

Violet, with the help of her cousins, then set to work to get her wardrobe in the best order, which was soon done, owing to her own thrifty habits—"a stitch in time saves nine." While thus engaged, she often broached the subject to her mother, to prepare her for it. Mrs. Grant grumbled and fretted as usual, but at last she gave way, saying, "Well, if it is really so that you must take a situation as governess, I would rather you went to a distance, for here your friends will slight you if they find you have to earn your own bread."

"My dear mother, if any of my friends will slight me on account of reverse of fortune, they are not worth having, and I shall not regret their loss—they are only the friends of a day ; my real friends will not forsake me, and it has been the cherished wish of my life to visit the land of my

birth, and as Madame Giatto tells me that Mr. Hammond is also a native of London, no doubt they will pass through on their way."

A few days later Mr. Hammond came to see them, ere they had left their home of luxury. The visit was very satisfactory, and he was so charmed with Violet that he offered her one hundred pounds salary, instead of the seventy-five Madame G. had specified. He settled everything with her uncle and herself, and it was thought best not to call Mrs. Grant till they had settled all for the journey, which was to take place in three weeks. She was to remain with her uncle till the day they would sail from New York. This was a great boon, as it would enable her to help her aunt in her removal to a smaller and humbler home at Brooklyn, the following week. All preliminaries being arranged she then went to call her mother, bounding up the stairs in excess of joy. "One hundred pounds," she exclaimed, "why fifty will be plenty for me, and then there will be fifty for my dear mother!"

Dancing into her room, she cried, repeating the words, "I am engaged, I am engaged." Mrs.

Grant, who had been reclining in her easy chair, now sat upright to know the cause of this interruption. "What do you mean, Violet, dancing about in that mad style?"

"It means, dear mamma, that I am engaged as governess to Mr. Hammond's only child, at a salary of one hundred pounds per year, with a prospect of seeing the old world, and all expenses paid; there now, what do you say to that, mother dear."

"Well, I hope you will like it, that is all I can say. Where is Mr. Hammond? I should like to see him? What kind of a person is he?"

"He is with uncle and aunt now, and waiting to see the mother whose daughter I am; so come, give your hair a brushing—there that will do," she said, brushing it herself, and then led the way into the library, where Mr. Hammond still sat conversing with her uncle.

Having been introduced, Mrs. Grant sat for a while with Mr. Hammond, and could not fail to be pleased with him. He was in all respects a fine gentleman, and assured Mrs. G. in the most kind and genial manner that Violet should

have the same care as if she were under her uncle's roof, and they would have liked him better had they known that sympathy for their fallen fortunes, had induced him to give the additional twenty-five pounds to her income.

The next few days were very busy ones to all, and fell very heavily upon a family who had never been exposed to the wear and tear of life. Violet did her best, and was a great comfort to her aunt. Mr. Temple's creditors kindly offered him all his furniture, but he chose to take only what was plainest and most necessary to furnish a small house with seven rooms, and a few days saw them settled in this comparatively humble home. By the aid of Violet, all had been arranged with great taste and ingenuity, and with a regard for comfort; and when the bustle and excitement was over, and they all sat down for their first meal, Mr. Temple felt a relief he had not experienced for many a day.

Violet's *Domestic Economy* was a great boon to them these first few days in their new home; it was she who arranged everything in the culinary department, to make it as compact as

possible for her cousin Carry, who was to manage the cooking for the future—or at least to try to, and to do with no other help than that of nurse till brighter days should come. The poor faithful thing proposed it herself to Violet, saying, “I think I could manage it all, my dear, except the washing, for now that your mamma is well, or nearly so, and will have only one room, I shall not have half enough to do if there were other servants; so you just tell your uncle so, and I will do all I can to save.”

Mrs. Grant at first gave a dissenting voice to the arrangement; not wishing to lose a hold upon the attendaht she had been so long accustomed to, however, she had to give in, and it was agreed that Miss Carry should assist in the cooking, and Violet's nurse would do the rest, except the washing, and they set to with such a hearty good-will to do for themselves, that in a short time they did not seem to miss the luxuries they had been accustomed to.

Mr. Temple had obtained employment in a mercantile house as manager, which brought in

an income sufficient for their support, and walked backwards and forwards to business every day.

Mr. and Mrs. Hammond, with their daughter and nurse, came at the expected time, and Violet soon saw that she had nothing to fear from her new friends; she found herself irresistibly drawn to the lady by a sister's love, and a warm friendship sprang up between them immediately. She herself, became a favourite with them all, more especially with the little Amelia, who is now to become her future charge; and the dear child would not leave her side since the first time she saw her new governess. Violet took her into her mother's room to bid the final farewell, as Mrs. Grant did not feel equal to going to see her off; but Mr. and Mrs. Temple accompanied their niece to the water's edge, and did not leave her till the ship hoisted her sail, and steered towards the Old World; and if there were heavy hearts on board, perhaps none were more sorrowful than this young and noble-hearted girl, who of her own accord, had left home and its tender associations, to try her fortune in the wide wide world; to be self-supporting herself, and assist

those who were so dear to her. As long as there was a speck of the city to be seen she remained on deck gazing at it, till she felt a little hand within her own, and a sweet voice saying, "Come Miss Violet, look at your Amelia now, you will see New York next year."

"I hope so," replied Violet; "If I thought I should not come back, I could not bear to go; but come, dear, I have neglected you in my sorrow, so tell me what we shall do now."

"Mamma has tea ready, so come, let us go into the saloon, and we will have it together; and you will feel better, and you will tell me a story of the school you were at."

Hand in hand they went into the cabin. Mrs. Hammond held out her hand to Violet, saying, "Be comforted, my child, I hope we shall come back safely, and find all your friends well and happy, as I trust my child and her mother will be; and now Miss Grant, I must beg of you to make yourself at home on all occasions, and do just as you please; treat me with the confidence of a sister, and if you are in any trouble come to me at any time."

They then sat down to tea, after which Violet took her young charge on deck, and gave her a sketch of her happy school life, at which the little Amelia heaved a sigh.

"Oh, I shall never be able to go to school; I am not strong enough, mamma says; but it must have been good fun to cook, and I wish she would let me do it sometimes."

"Well, we shall see when we get to France. I think mamma will not object to anything that will do your health good. I used to be very delicate myself, and I attribute my being healthy and strong, to being allowed to work in the kitchen occasionally. Such a thing was never thought of till I went to Canada, and when I returned home they scarcely knew me, I looked so well.

After remaining on deck a short time longer, they returned to the cabin, where the kindness she met with from her new found friends, on this the first evening of her being with them, convinced her that she had indeed been fortunate in obtaining a home in such an amiable family. Long before reaching the shores of England, had

they been her own relations, she could not have been more at home with them, Everything that could add to her comfort was thought of, and on reaching England, knowing her extreme desire to see as much as possible of her native place, they prolonged their stay there for one week, to enable her to visit all the places of interest.

From her uncle she had learned where the last resting-place of that father was, whom she had never known, and kind Mrs. Hammond took her there, and they soon found the spot by the tomb erected to his memory by her uncle. As Violet stood there she shed tears of sorrow over his grave ; and was thinking, had he been spared, should I have been the same Violet, and a voice seemed to whisper, "it is better as it is."

Arrived in France, they went to ———, where they took up their abode, in a beautiful villa ; and as soon as they were really settled, the little Amelia commenced her daily lessons with her kind teacher, to which was added for her amusement as well as instruction, the cooking of some little dainty for her dear mamma ; and as Violet

predicted, gaining strength by a little healthful exercise, to the great delight of her parents.

Violet felt herself very happy, and when the first letter from home brought cheering news, and that all was going on well, she gave herself up to the thorough enjoyment of the present, and the delightful occupation of teaching her interesting little pupil.

She often corresponded with the dear friends of her school-days. Grace was back, and had written that she did indeed miss her old friends, but new comers were there, and she was trying to help them along the path of duty, which they seemed inclined to shrink from, like she had once done.

Long and loving were the letters she wrote, inclosing all the news both in school and out of it, as far as she could, and Violet in return had much that was interesting to tell her of her sojourn in France, and all her happy surroundings there.

Winter having passed, again Violet's birthday is at hand. Oh, how forcibly does the memory of her last natal-day come back to her, and how

many changes too have taken place since then. Who will remember her now in a land of strangers—it was thus that she soliloquised to herself on the eve of her eighteenth birthday.

“To-morrow — to-morrow !” she exclaimed ; “what would I not give to see all the dear faces who greeted me so lovingly last year ; surely I shall get letters from some of them—Grace at least ; they cannot but remember that happy evening at school.”

But when to-morrow had come, on opening her eyes, she found the whole apartment was diffused with a delicious perfume from a pot of violets that were standing by her bedside.

It was such a surprise to her, that tears of joy wetted the flowers as she pressed them to her lips. None but her little pupil could have prepared this pretty surprise, and before she could dress two little arms were around her neck, and two little lips were pressed against hers, while a sweet little voice said, “Many happy returns of your birthday, you dear, darling Violet ; you are just as sweet and as nice as those little flowers are, and here is a keepsake from your own

Amelia," handing Violet a locket with her own sweet face looking so rogueish out of it.

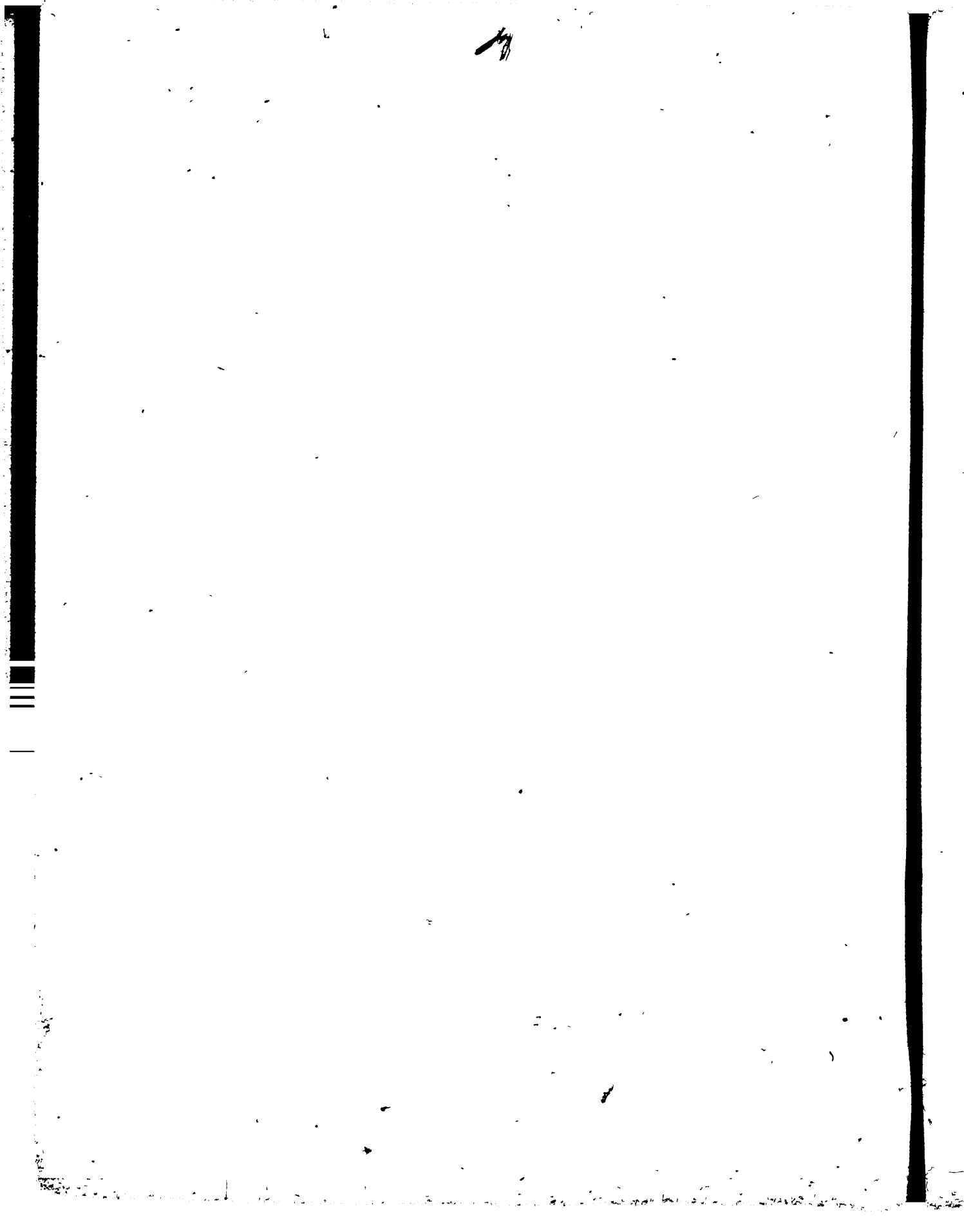
Mr. and Mrs. Hammond's present was a very substantial one; it was a check for twenty pounds, which Violet immediately despatched home to her dear kind uncle. The donor knowing what would be done with it, had made it payable on one of the New York banks, and arriving at the time it did, it was of more service than thousands of dollars would have been at another time.

Letters were received from Maude and Minnie, but not one from Grace, and this cast a shadow upon her enjoyment for the day. It was now nearly two months since she had written; what could be the matter? was she sick? had she forgotten Violet's birthday? No, no! she could not have forgotten last year so soon; she would write to Maude, and find out what could be the matter with dear Grace, whom she still thought at school.

And where was Grace, if not at school? Ah, Violet! she whom you are now reproaching with neglect, is watching day and night at the bed-

side of her beloved father, over whose countenance the shadow of death is already passing. A few hours more, and the beloved and petted daughter will be fatherless as you are, and in worldly prospects just as poor, for her father has lost everything.







CHAPTER X.

DEATH OF MR. MORTON.

MR. MORTON had lost largely by the very bank which brought the final crash to Violet's uncle. Other losses had followed, one after the other, till he became in great difficulty, and to extricate himself from the impending ruin of his whole fortune, he had entered largely into a speculation, sinking the whole and losing all; and when the news came, strong man as he was, he sank under it. The shock brought on an apoplectic fit, which in a few days terminated his days in death.

Grace had observed at Christmas that all was not right at home, and referring to her mother to know the cause of it, that lady had answered, "I don't exactly know, my dear, but I think your father lost a few thousand dollars by that bank

failure, and it seems to me he is making an unnecessary fuss about it. He told me a few weeks ago that we must cut down our expenses, and even asked me if I could not dispense with Fanny, when he knows that ever since I was twelve years of age I have had a maid. I should like to know who is to help me to dress, or look after my wardrobe; and Fanny has enough to do I assure you (which was very true), looking after Aunt Jane's clothes too, and helping her to dress; and I do think your aunt might pay at least part of her salary. He won't go to any party, nor will he have, as we always have done once a month—a dinner party. I do not know how I shall get through the winter in this dull fashion; and your aunt speaks of going home in March, and I do not blame her."

"Never mind, mamma, we shall be happier without her, and let her take Fanny with her. I shall help to dress you, and I am also able to look after your wardrobe. Thanks to my school-teaching, I can use my needle. If papa has lost money, it is our duty to help him to save what we can in the house."

Grace then went to find her father, who was in the library, surrounded by ledgers and account books.

"Papa," she began, "what is troubling you? Will you tell your daughter, who is grieving to see her darling father in sorrow, which she so willingly would share with him?"

"My darling Grace," replied he, "any man who possesses a daughter like mine, ought not to despair, even if he does see his fortune passing away from him, and yet it is for you, my child, and your dear mother, who all her life has been accustomed to the luxuries that wealth alone can bring; this is why I desire to retain what I can see clearly is passing through my fingers, instead of putting you in that position to which by nature you are entitled. I already see you in poverty, if the wheel of fortune is not turning in my favour."

Grace stood a few minutes, pondering what she should say. The want of money was new to her, and now to be told that they would be poor was no cheering prospect, but her better nature had been brought out, and she would not

mind poverty if only her father could be comforted. Throwing her arms lovingly around his neck, and laying her head on his shoulder, she replied, "Never mind, dear papa, do not grieve about that, God will take care of us. It was not your fault, was it, papa, that you lost so much?"

"No, my child, it was not my fault. I may have been a little too easy, but this catastrophe could not have been averted by any act of my own, and if poverty should come, how will your mother bear it? She might reproach me. Oh! I could not bear that, my child; it would kill me. For yourself I do not fear; I know that you possess that which no reverse of fortune can deprive you of, and which will give you strength in the hour of trial; and promise me, darling, that whatever may happen, you will bear it bravely, and do all you can to comfort your mother."

"Oh, papa! you cannot think how grieved I am; but if we must undergo this trial, do not fear for me, and I hope that mamma will also see that money is not the only thing to make us happy. I thank you; I thank you with all my

heart that you did so wise a thing as to send me from home. What would have become of me now, if I had not learnt to be useful, and if the worst comes to the worst, I think, young as I am, I can teach, like Violet Grant, who is now earning one hundred pounds per year, and is treated as one of the family."

"Your friend is a brave girl, and I know my child would not be wanting in courage, should she be required to leave this fine house and all it contains for a smaller one; still I hope it will not come to that. But there is one thing, my dear, when you return to school make the very most of all your advantages there, so that should the enemy we so much dread really come to our door, you may help me in a thousand ways with the talents you are so well endowed with. Your aunt talks of going home, and I hope she will. She has often made your mother unhappy, by causing her to say and do things against her judgment; and should I have the misfortune to fail, I know what I may have to expect from her uncharitable remarks. Whatever good points she may possess, are entirely hidden by her

abominable pride. She is often miserable herself, and then must make others so too."

"Yes! mamma told me she was going in March; but would it not be better for me to stay at home now. I do not say I know enough, but still I can say that I have worked hard, since I found that I had so long been standing in my own light, and since which I have been doubly diligent in improving myself in every way; and since I learned to love my Saviour, I feel——"

Her father here had pressed her closer to his heart. "You must go back to school, my child, at least for a time. I would not for the world that you should stop half-way; besides I have already paid for the next term for you, so it would not do to let you stay away now. You shall hear from me if anything happens which you should know. At present, though I have lost large sums of money, still one turn may bring it all back to me; so do not spoil your holidays with false regrets, which after all may pass away without hurting us; so let us spend our Christmas once more happy together if we can. I only wish you had brought one or two

of your young friends from school, it would have made it a little more lively for us all."

"Yes, I do wish I had Maude and Minnie, but every one who can, likes to spend Christmas at home; but I do hope I shall have them again some time, perhaps in the summer."

"I hope so too," replied Mr. Morton, "I often recall their happy smiling faces, and the joyful days they spent with us last summer."

Christmas came, and we have to record with it the advent of an unexpected visitor, a young gentleman from England, and a distant relation of Mrs. Morton's. He was making a tour through America, previous to settling down as a private gentleman on one of his large estates. Alexander Watson was a very handsome young man of twenty-two, and of good family. He had passed through the various colleges, and had studied for the bar; but it was not certain he would ever practice, as his father was old, and wanted him to assist in overlooking their numerous estates. Alexander had always wished to see America, so on leaving college he had his father's permission to visit Canada and the United States for one

year. He arrived in Montreal on the twenty-fourth December, and knowing that he had distant relations in that city, he determined to stay over Christmas in order to find them out. He presented himself at Mr. Morton's office, and when that gentleman heard who he was, he bade him a hearty welcome, adding, "You must come home with me, my wife will be delighted to see you."

Mr. Watson consented at once, and so about noon that day, Aunt Jane, who was sitting near a window, saw Mr. Morton approach with a stranger. Grace was busy in the drawing-room, decorating it with flowers and ivy. She was now poised up on a step-ladder decorating her father and mother's portrait, when Mr. Morton entered with the young stranger.

Blushing like a rose, and feeling the awkwardness of her position, she did not know what to do; but Mr. Watson stepped forward to help her down, while her father apologized for coming in so abruptly; "I asked Fanny where I should find your mamma and aunt, and she said in the drawing-room."

"You almost made me fall, coming in so suddenly," replied Grace, "but if Mr. Watson will excuse me, I will run and fetch mamma and aunty;" so saying she left the room, blushing and laughing to herself, and wondering who it could be that papa had brought home at such a time, when she had hoped to be all alone; for of course he will stay to dinner, and spend Christmas eve. She knew her father too well, not to know that he would not have brought him, unless he had intended to make the stranger welcome, on this holy eve.

And when she called her mother and Aunt Jane, telling them that Mr. Watson from England, was down stairs and waiting to see them, her aunt jumped up all in a flutter, "What name did you say? Surely it cannot be Mr. Alexander Watson's son; why the gentleman I saw with your father was as tall as himself."

Yes, it was, indeed Mr. Alexander Watson, son of an old playmate and friend of these two ladies, who had come so unexpectedly upon them as their guest; and his presence at this festive season went so far as to make them feel quite happy, and for-

getful of the cloud in their horizon which was about to burst.

When Grace retired for the night, she found her thoughts turning again and again to Mr. Watson, who had that evening so interested and delighted them all. He possessed those qualities which made him an agreeable companion—young and handsome, with a melodious voice and great conversational powers; and from one or two remarks made by him, it was evident he was one of the Lord's children. This constituted a bond of sympathy for Grace, who, loving the Saviour as she did, loved those who loved Him, too. They had sung and played together most of the evening, and indeed, before he left that night, they were like old friends. He promised to spend the next day with them, and a natural and good understanding seemed to exist from this first evening of their acquaintance.

When Mr. Watson had reached his hotel, and was in the quiet of his own room, his thoughts had never left Grace. "What a glorious being is Miss Morton!" he said aloud. "If she is a specimen of Canadian ladies, I think our own need not think ~~so~~ much of themselves: so fresh-looking, so natural

and unaffected ; why it is quite a treat to talk to one of the handsomest girls I ever saw in my life, and one of the most sensible, and no pride about her. How sweetly she sings ; why she beats my sister all to atoms, and Annie can sing well too. Did she not look pretty, helping at the supper-table ; and how simple and tastefully she was dressed. She is nearly eighteen. I wonder why her father will send her back to school. I wonder what they can teach her that she does not know. Well, I shall see her again in the morning ; that's good ! Grace ! what a sweet name ; yes, and it belongs to one of the sweetest girls on earth. I wonder whether they will ask me again, after to-morrow, to their house. I hope so. Wasn't it lucky I came here first !"

He stood at his window, looking out on a Canadian winter landscape—everything looking so white and pure as the Infant whose birth was this night memorialized by many millions, in all lands where His name was known ; then, looking up to the heavens, covered with stars, where a sweet mother now dwelt, he thought, " Oh, could she only have heard me singing that Christmas hymn she so

much loved, with Grace, how happy it would have made her ; to know that her son had never forgotten her early teachings, nor ever would do."

When on his bended knees before the Throne of Grace, that night, his new-found friends were mingled with his petitions.

The next day was spent very happily. They all went to church together, and it made Grace happy to know he was there ; and afterwards they had quiet enjoyment at home. The day was spent like other Christmas days, with a difference on this occasion—they had only one guest, instead of a number, as in former years—but the presence of this one favoured guest seemed to have brought happiness and merriment into their midst ; and even Aunt Jane laid aside her grumbling for the time being, to enter into the enjoyment of a conversation with the son of an old and esteemed friend. England and England's doings formed a pleasant theme, and she never tired of it. Mr. Watson had a happy way of adapting himself to his company ; all enjoyed his society, and when, at the end of the evening, he rose to take his leave,

it was with reluctance they parted with their English guest.

It was only a few days now before Grace would return to school. Mr. Watson had given another call to wish her good-bye, and these two, so recently acquainted, parted as old friends, hoping to meet again, little dreaming of what would happen before that time.

Poor Grace was most unwilling to leave ; but it was her father's wish, and that was enough for her. A dark foreboding accompanied her that she could not get rid of ; and if a week passed without her receiving a letter, she would be sure that the next would contain the dreaded news ; but no, the next letter would be so cheerful and hopeful, that after a while she became her old self again—which she had not been for many weeks after her return to school.

It was quite settled that Aunt Jane would return to England in a few weeks, and was making preparations for the journey ; and Grace looked forward daily for a visit from her and her mother, on her way. But February and March passed, and still they did not come, and a fortnight more would

bring the Easter holidays, and she should be going home : when one day, Madame Giatto called her out of the class-room, taking her into her own room. She put a telegram-message into her hand, which contained only a few words, but which was enough to make Grace's heart stand almost still. The words were to Madame Giatto ; " Send Miss Morton home at once ; her father is dangerously ill."

" Oh, my God ! my dear darling father," sobbed Grace, in the veriest agony. She did not remember him ever having been ill, and now to hear that he was in danger ; she knew only too well that when strong men like her father are taken suddenly, that it often proves fatal.

Madame Giatto did all in her power to comfort her young friend, for whom she felt most deeply ; her own hands helped to prepare her for the journey, for which she left in an hour after receiving the message, accompanied by Madame Giatto and several of her companions, who did all they could to testify their sorrow for their beloved Grace.

She was soon ensconced in a far corner of the railway carriage, almost heart broken, and swift as the train went on, it passed too slowly for her, and

when at last the guard called out Kingston, and the train stopping for some minutes, she was too absorbed in her grief to hear the conductor say, "Miss Morton is in this carriage, Sir," till a voice spoke to her, whose tones she only knew too well, and tears the first she had shed, burst forth.

Yes it was indeed Mr. Watson who sat beside her, and trying all in his power to comfort her ; but she went on weeping bitterly till it roused the compassion of her fellow-travellers, who, when they heard the cause of her anguish, hushed their talk, and one old lady going to her, placed her arms around her, and hushed and comforted her like a child, and when at last overpowered, she induced her to lay her head down where she fell asleep from sheer exhaustion ; then turning to Mr. Watson she said, "There, let her sleep a little, poor thing, perhaps she has not heard the worst."

Mr. Watson thanked her for her kindness, but she only shook her head, saying, "It is woman's province to soothe grief. I am glad she is quiet now for a little time."

Grace made a pretty picture in the railway carriage, lying with her hands folded on her breast as

if in prayer, sleeping a heavy, fitful slumber. The kind old lady and Mr. Watson looking on anxiously, the latter never taking his eyes off the object that had in so short a time become all in all to him.

"Are you her brother or cousin?" enquired the lady, and when he told her neither, only a friend, she fixed her searching eyes upon him in such a way that brought the blood to his face, but he was so busy with his own thoughts, that when she spoke again he only answered in monosyllables.

It was indeed fortunate that Mr. Watson was in the city at the time Mr. Morton was taken ill, and his offer to go and meet Grace was gladly accepted by Mrs. Morton, who was in a most piteous state of helplessness at her husband's sad condition. Despite her short-comings she had fondly loved him.

The cloud which had hung so long over Mr. Morton, which had harassed him by day, and left him sleepless at night had at last burst; the speculation in which the last of his fortune had been sunk, had proved a myth, and when the news came, it struck him down, and he was now on a sick bed from which he would never rise.

Ever since Christmas, Mr. Watson, although he

had expressed his intention of going out West, had never left the city except for a few days at a time ; it seemed as if an unseen hand was drawing him back to the same spot all the time. He had called at Mr. Morton's office daily while in town, and had done so on this fatal morning. Only one hour before had the unfortunate gentleman been taken ill, and was found by one of his clerks lying on the floor, with the fatal letter in his hands which was the cause of this sad catastrophe. Mr. Watson, on hearing the sad news, hastened to the house, where Mr. Morton had already been conveyed ; he forwarded the telegram to Grace, and took the next train to meet her on her way home.

On awaking from her slumber, she felt much better, and listened quietly, though sorrowfully, to the details Mr. Watson gave her of her father's condition, and with kind and loving words he prepared her for the worst, telling her how much would depend upon her to comfort her poor mother. He led her thoughts to Him who holds our lives in His hand ; and on this sad journey they found that both had tasted of the fountain of living waters, and felt even then happy in the thought.

On reaching home she found, as had been described, a sad scene. There was her father lying helpless and in a dying condition, his eyes fixed upon the door as if awaiting some object to appear ; her mother weeping by his side, and Aunt Jane looking frightened and humbled, and the family doctor standing over his patient. Grace entered noiselessly, but he detected her in an instant ; she was the object for which he had been looking, and though in his attack he became speechless, it seemed as if the sight of her had given him strength to bid her welcome. She was soon by his side, which she never left as long as life remained, taking a little rest occasionally. Poor Mrs. Morton became so overpowered that she had to be taken to bed, and was hardly able to leave it, and Aunt Jane was with her most of the time. It was indeed a house of mourning ; scarcely a sound was heard above the breathing of the patient. Mr. Watson came backwards and forwards, to see what assistance he could render ; the doctor kept coming and going, and the servants spoke in whispers, each knowing that a life hung in the balance.

A few hours before the dreaded summons came,

Mr. Morton became quite conscious and was able to speak freely, he told Grace that a few hundred pounds, the rest of her mother's money, was all that was left out of a large fortune. The costly mansion and grounds in which they lived, if rented or sold, would, in a small house, give them enough to live upon. Your aunt Jane had better go home, she would never consent to live in a small house and in a plain style, but you and your poor mother will have enough to keep you from want. Mr. Watson will settle all for you, he has promised me to look after you and your mother, and if he should one day ask you to be his wife, and you my child can love him sufficiently to become his for life, remember you have your dying father's blessing. This was the substance of his last words to his much loved daughter, the day before he died.

A little later and the minister of God entered that dying chamber to administer the rites of the Church of England, the Holy Sacrament to the dying man, who received it from the messenger of Christ, with the true hope of salvation, and cleansing from all his sins. All the family including our new friend, partook of this Holy Sacrifice

with him at his dying request ; and, ere the dawning of another day, he breathed his last, with his daughter and wife's hands pressed in his own, Aunt Jane kneeling at the foot, Mr. Watson and the medical man at the head of the bed, the servants at a distance, weeping bitterly for the kind master they are about to lose. Mr. Morton's voice was once more heard in feeble accents, " I know that my Redeemer liveth," and with these last words, his spirit passed away, leaving a desolate wife and heart-broken daughter to mourn his loss.





CHAPTER XI.

THE END.

SOME weeks elapsed before poor Mrs. Morton could be roused from her grief, to make plans for the future. Her sister would sail for England in a few days, and she tried to induce her and Grace to accompany her. "No," answered Mrs. Morton, "I cannot yet be separated from the grave of my poor husband. Oh ! when living, I might have been a better wife, and God forgive me for all I have done.

A small house, standing in a neat garden, was at last found, to which Grace moved with her mother, the day after her aunt left, retaining Molly to act as general servant for them ; at first she thought of only taking a young girl, which, with the assistance she could render, would have been sufficient, but Molly had become so attached to her young mis-

tress, that she begged hard to be retained in the family.

"If it is the wages you are thinking of Miss Grace, I tell you I would work for nothing, rather than live away from you and mistress. And now that Miss Jane is going home, it would not be right to turn me away, when the house will be like Heaven, and maybe you will go home some time and take me along, as Miss Jane has done Fanny, (although I do not envy her), to see old Ireland once more."

"If ever I do go home I promise to take you with me," said Grace.

The small house would only contain a small proportion of their costly furniture, so the surplus was sold with the estate and realized a large sum, but several debts having to be paid out of it, reduced the amount considerably, leaving only three thousand dollars for the widow, which would not have been sufficient for their maintenance, had not Grace at once taken a few daily pupils in music, and also obtained an appointment as Organist in one of the churches, with a good salary ; this, with their good management was sufficient.

They were very peaceful, and would have been happy had it not been for the father's "vacant chair."

After all was settled, Mr. Watson came to bid them "farewell," knowing they would be better alone for a time; and had in vain pressed upon Mrs. Morton, many offers of a pecuniary kind, as delicately as he could, but which that lady gently declined.

"We shall have quite enough Mr. Watson, with the help of my daughter. I do not look upon money as I once did, and I know the Lord will provide us our daily bread."

But I cannot bear to think of Grace teaching and slaving herself so, said Mr. Watson. I shall come back at Christmas and ask her to be mine. Will you also give me your blessing then as Mr. Morton did before he died; but do not tell her any thing now. I do not want her to know my intention till the right time comes.

So he went, and Grace and her mother are left alone with their faithful servant. A correspondence was still kept up with her friends at school. Violet is still abroad, and Minnie and Susie Heasel pay

them a visit in the fall. They perceive a sweet sadness about Grace which pervades all her movements ; but she is the lovely and beautiful Grace still, the same as ever, though verging into womanhood. Mrs. Morton they find is greatly changed. All the high-born pride they remembered so well is gone. She is always engaged in some light occupation, either helping her servant in the house or about the garden, and sometimes preparing a little surprise for her daughter on her return from teaching, and day by day she draws nearer to her Master's feet, making Grace very happy.

These young visitors have been gone some time and Christmas time is again close at hand for this small circle. Mrs. Morton is in a great flutter of expectation, she alone having a great secret entrusted to her, and one on which so much depended the future happiness of her beloved daughter. Mr. Watson had written regularly since leaving them till this last month, when no news at all had been received from him. It was very excusable if Mrs. Morton did feel a little unusual excitement, as now was the time to expect him to come and redeem his promise. What, if any thing has happened to him.

This, and other vague fears, harassed her. Grace, who had observed her mother's anxiety, attributed it to another cause. She thought of that *one* whose memory they both so fondly cherished, and who at this time last year was hearty and well, and happy with them all, and she tried all in her power to divert her mother from this great sorrow.

But a great surprise awaits them. On the morning of the 24th a cab drove up to the door, out of which sprang Maude Melville, the beloved friend of Grace. Yes, she had come, knowing what a sad season of remembrances it would be for them. She hoped to enliven them by her presence. Her own friends demurred at her coming away from them, but she begged them to excuse her for her dear friend's sake. So here she was, looking as fresh and as blooming as when we saw her last. She was well repaid for the cold journey she had had, by the hearty and joyous welcome they gave, and even Molly thanked her.

"Well, it is the best deed you ever did in your life, Miss, by coming to-day," she said; "I do not know what poor missis will do to-morrow, thinking who was here last year, all

healthy and well—so he was. I only wish that nice gentleman that was here when master died, and also last Christmas too, would take it into his head to come : he ought to, at any rate ; for I am thinking he thinks more of my young mistress than of anybody else in the whole world."

This was a little confidential talk between Miss Melville and Molly, while the latter was lighting a fire in her room, and she was dressing to go down to an early dinner that Grace and Mrs. Morton were preparing.

It was Mrs. Morton who decorated their little drawing-room this year, to spend Christmas-day in, while Maude and Grace were left to the entire enjoyment of a tete-a-tete together, talking of old times and old friends, of which they had many. Maude had lately paid a visit to the school, and was well posted up in the affairs of it. Under Madame Giatto's able management, it still thrives wonderfully. Two days, instead of one, are now given in the department for Domestic Economy. So many are joining the class, that one is not found

sufficient. Parents are alive to the fact, that book-learning and accomplishment is not the end of education ; something more substantial¹ is required, namely, a knowledge of domestic duties, to strengthen them, and prepare their daughters for the battle of life.

Just before evening set in, and while Mrs. Morton lay asleep on the sofa, Grace and Maude were sitting together with clasped hands, so engrossed in their own conversation. Dear Grace had been giving a sketch of the last hours of her dear father's life ; the door opened, and Molly announced " Mr. Watson ! "

Yes, there he was, looking so bright and handsome. He took Grace's hands, and held them between his own till the blood mounted to her temples, which Maude, who was now duly introduced, was not slow to perceive ; and drew her own conclusions.

When Mrs. Morton awoke, and she became aware of who her visitor was, her countenance changed to what Grace remembered it was just before she lost her dear husband.

" I was so afraid you would not come," she

said to Mr. Watson. (Ah! her mother knew he was coming.)

"Yes, I had hard work to get here in time, the state of the roads is so bad; but I would have walked, rather than not have come to-day," he added, with a meaning glance at Grace, which made her a little embarrassed; and Maude, who seemed to understand all, with wonderful tact, begged to be excused, as she would like to unpack before it was quite dark; and Mrs. Morton, following her example, went to see that a substantial tea was prepared for the traveller.

And now they were alone—Mr. Watson taking a seat beside her, with her hand in his. He then told her of his love, and asked her to become his wife. "I think I have loved you from the first moment I saw you upon that step-ladder," he said, "but when I witnessed your devotion to your dying father, I felt that I could never love any other woman but you. I asked your father for your hand, and he blessed me before he died; and if it is possible for his happy spirit to see us, he will rejoice to see us together. Tell me,

Grace, my darling, can you love me? will you trust your happiness in my keeping? and if a life of long devotion can atone for your sufferings, it shall be yours."

Unaffected, Grace gave him her hand, saying, "Yes! I love you, dear Alexander, and am proud to be your wife, if you can be satisfied with a dowerless bride. My father loved you, and so does mamma, and it will make her very happy to see her daughter loved by such a man as yourself."

Long did they sit together, till Molly brought in the lights, and said tea was ready. Hand in hand they went to Mrs. Morton, and asked her blessing. Tears of joy ran down her face, as she lovingly laid her hands upon their heads—Maude standing by with her own eyes filling with tears, which she in vain tried to suppress.

It was a happy Christmas day for them, although they did not forget the beloved one who headed the table last year; but they knew that it had been the Lord's will that he should be removed early, and submitted without a murmur. Mr. Watson pleaded for an early day

for their marriage, and Grace promised that after the first year of mourning she would be his. So he went to England the first week of the new year, promising to return early in the spring to claim his bride..

They are now left alone once more, to prepare for another vital change in their prospects. Spring is here, and Mr. Watson has returned with his sister, to become acquainted with Grace, and be one of the bridesmaids. The old gentleman, Mr. Watson, Senr., is in England, preparing the old family mansion for the reception of his new daughter-in-law, and is anxious to see her, and welcome her as his child.

Violet, Maude, and Minnie have promised to be bridesmaids, and the wedding, which is to be a quiet one, will take place in a few days. Simple white tarlatan and orange blossoms will form the bridal attire; and the bridesmaids dresses correspond, except in flowers and trimming. This simple and impressive dress was at Grace's own desire; it was more in accordance with her feelings to wear it, rather than the costly robes and jewels put to her choice. The

bridal procession formed a very pretty tableau ; and perhaps there never stood before the altar, to be united for life, a handsomer couple than Alexander Watson and Grace Morton.

Now one look more at Violet's home, and our story is done. Mr. Temple is partner in the business now, of which he once became manager after his failure. Violet's remittances, from time to time have done great service. Mrs. Grant still fancies herself an invalid, and she is not allowed to miss any of the delicacies she had been accustomed to in earlier days, when her brother was a wealthy man, and it is only since her daughter's return, that she becomes acquainted with the fact that the hot-house fruit and flowers provided especially for her in winter time, have been purchased for her from the earnings of her aged and faithful servant, who had such a pleasure in procuring them for her dear mistress. But it is rumoured that Violet has promised to become the wife of a wealthy

man very soon. If so, we may suppose that she will be able to take care of her mother, and her old nurse for the future.



